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1952-1954

Volume XIII

Indochina

(in two parts)
Part 2

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Editor
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Decimal files of the Department of State.

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Collection of documentation on certain official visits of European heads of government and foreign ministers to the United States and on major international conferences attended by the Secretary of State for the period 1949–1955, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Conference Files, Lot 60 D 627

Collection of documentation on certain official visits of heads of government and foreign ministers to the United States and on major international conferences attended by the Secretary of State for the period 1953–1958, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat. This file is a continuation of Lot 59 D 95.

FE Files, Lot 55 D 388

Files maintained by the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs for the year 1953.

FE Files, Lot 55 D 480

Files maintained by the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs for the year 1954.

INR Files, Lot 58 D 528

Miscellaneous Top Secret files for the years 1949–1954 as retired by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, including master file of Intelligence Estimates (IE's) prepared by the Department of State Estimates Group.

INR–NIE Files

Files retained by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research containing copies of National Intelligence Estimates and Special National Intelligence Estimates, including NIE's and SNIE's for the 1952–1954 period.

OCB Files, Lot 62 D 430

Master files of the Operations Coordinating Board for the years 1953–1960, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

ON Files, Lot 60 D 641

Collection of memoranda of the Press Conferences of the Secretary of State (1935–1955), Department of State Radio (Wireless) Bulletins (1935–1945), News Digests (1945–1952), and other unclassified press materials for the years 1909–1954, as maintained by the Office of News, Bureau of Public Affairs.

PPS Files, Lot 64 D 563

Master file of documents, drafts, records of meetings, memoranda, and related correspondence for the years 1947–1953 of the Policy Planning Staff.

PPS Files, Lot 65 D 101

Master file of documents, drafts, records of meetings, memoranda, and related correspondence for the year 1954 of the Policy Planning Staff.

Presidential Correspondence, Lot 66 D 204

Exchanges of correspondence between the President and the heads of foreign governments for the years 1953–1964, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

PSA Files, Lot 54 D 190

Consolidated files of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs for the years 1937–1952.

PSA Files, Lot 58 D 207

Certain files of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs for the years 1949–1955, containing primarily material on Indochina.

Secretary's Letters, Lot 56 D 459

Correspondence of the Secretary of State for the years 1945–1956, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Secretary's Memoranda, Lot 53 D 444

Chronological collections of the Secretary of State's memoranda, memoranda of conversation, and memoranda of conversation with the President for the years 1947–1953, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, Lot 64 D 199

Chronological collections of the Secretary of State's memoranda of conversation and the Under Secretary of State's memoranda of conversation for the years 1953–1960, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, Lot 65 D 238

Chronological collections of the Secretary of State's memoranda of conversation with the President for the years 1949–1952, memoranda of the Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State for the years 1951–1952, and the Secretary of State's memoranda of conversation with Senator Tom Connally of Texas for the years 1950–1951, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Secretary's Staff Meetings, Lot 63 D 75

Chronological collections of the minutes of the Secretary of State's staff meetings during the years 1952–1960, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

S/P–NSC Files, Lot 62 D 1

Serial and subject master file of National Security Council documents and correspondence for the years 1948–1961, as maintained by the Policy Planning Staff.

S/S–NSC Files, Lot 63 D 351

Serial master file of National Security Council documents and correspondence and related Department of State memoranda for the years 1947–1961, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files, Lot 66 D 95

Administrative and miscellaneous National Security Council documentation, including NSC Records of Action, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat for the years 1947–1963.

S/S–NSC Files, Lot 66 D 148

Miscellaneous files concerning subjects considered by the National Security Council during the period 1949–1962, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

State–JCS Meetings, Lot 61 D 417

Top secret records of meetings between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and representatives of the Department of State for the period 1951–1959 and selected problem files on the Middle East for the period 1954–1956, as maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Vietnam Desk Files, Lot 58 D 257

Subject files of the Officer in Charge of Vietnamese Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, for the years 1954–1955.

United States Mission at the United Nations, New York

USUN Files

Files of the United States Mission at the United Nations.

Agency for International Development (files of predecessor agencies, the Mutual Security Administration and the Foreign Operations Administration)

MSA–FOA Message Files, FRC 55 A 374

Telegrams, airgrams, despatches, and reports to and from all overseas missions from January 1, 1953 to June 30, 1954 as maintained by MSA–FOA headquarters.

MSA–FOA Director's Files, FRC 56 A 632

General subject and country file from the Office of the MSA–FOA Director covering all aspects of the foreign aid program for the years 1952–1955.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas

Dulles Papers

Records of John Foster Dulles, 1952–1959.

Whitman File

Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President of the United States, 1953–1961, maintained by his personal Secretary, Ann C. Whitman. The Whitman File includes the following elements: the Name Series, the Dulles–Herter Series, Eisenhower Diaries, Ann Whitman (ACW) Diaries, National Security Council Records, Miscellaneous Records, Cabinet Papers, Legislative

Meetings, International Meetings, the Administration Series, and the International File.

Eisenhower Records

Includes the daily appointment books of President Eisenhower for the years 1953–1961.

James C. Hagerty Papers

Papers of James C. Hagerty, Press Secretary to President Eisenhower, for the years 1953–1961.

White House Office Files

Several White House office collections, including files of the Office of the Staff Secretary, and Project "Clean Up."

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

JCS Records

National Archives Record Group 218, Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Naval Historical Division, Washington, D.C.

Radford Papers

The personal papers of Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Commander in Chief, Pacific (1949–1953) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1953–1957), presently located in the Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Division, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey

Dulles Papers, Daily Appointments

Daily log of the meetings and appointments of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for the years 1953–1959.

Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri

Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File (PSF)

Papers of Harry S. Truman as President, 1945–1953, maintained by his personal secretary.

United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

Ridgway Papers

Papers of General Matthew B. Ridgway, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, August 15, 1953–June 30, 1955.

PART B. PUBLISHED SOURCES

The following publications, including secondary accounts, were particularly useful in the preparation of this volume. Citations to additional published documents, memoirs, and other primary sources are provided throughout the volume as appropriate. No responsibility is taken by the Department of State for the accuracy of events set forth in unofficial sources.

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Sherman Adams, *First-Hand Report* (New York, Harper & Row, 1961).

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Victor Bator, *Vietnam: A Diplomatic Tragedy* (Dobbs Ferry, New York, Oceana Publications, 1965).

Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled*, volume II, *Vietnam at War* (New York, Praeger, 1967).

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Philippe Devillers and Jean Lacouture, *End of a War: Indochina, 1954* (New York, Praeger, 1969).

Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization* (New York, Praeger, 1971).

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Anthony Eden, *Memoirs of Anthony Eden: Full Circle* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1960).

Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953–1956* (Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Company, 1963).

Paul Ely, *Memoires: L'Indochine dans la tourmente* (Paris, Librairie Plon, 1964).

Denise Folliot, ed., *Documents on International Affairs*, 1952, 1953, and 1954. Royal Institute of International Affairs (London, Oxford University Press, 1955–1957).

France. Assemblée Nationale, *Journal Officiel de la République Française, Débates Parlementaires, Assemblée Nationale*, 1952–1954.

Melvin Gurtov, *The First Vietnam Crisis* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1967).

Ellen J. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, 1940–1955* (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1955).

Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*. 4 vols. (Hanoi, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960–1962).

Edwin Bickford Hooper, Dean C. Allard, and Oscar P. Fitzgerald, *The United States Navy and the Vietnam Conflict*, volume I, *The Setting of the Stage to 1959*. Navy History Division, Department of the Navy (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1976).

Joseph Laniel, *Le drame Indochinois: De Dien-Bien-Phu au pari de Genève* (Paris, Librairie Plon, 1957).

Edward G. Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars: An American's Mission to Southeast Asia* (New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972).

Henri Navarre, *Agonie de l'Indochine* (Paris, Librairie Plon, 1956).

Nixon, Richard, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1978).

The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decision-making on Vietnam [The Senator Gravel Edition]. 4 vols. (Boston, Beacon Press, 1971). *See also* United States Department of Defense, *United States–Vietnam Relations*.

Arthur W. Radford. *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: The Memoirs of Admiral Arthur W. Radford*. edited by Stephen Jurika, Jr. (Stanford, California, Hoover Institution Press, 1980).

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United States President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1960).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Editor's Note.—This list does not include standard abbreviations in common usage; unusual abbreviations of rare occurrence which are clarified at appropriate points; and those abbreviations and contractions which, although uncommon, are understandable from the context.

AA, anti-aircraft
ABN, airborne
AC, aircraft
AEC, Atomic Energy Commission
AF, Air Force
AFFE, Armed Forces Far East
AFOIN, Air Force Office of Intelligence
AFP, Agence France Presse
ALUSNA, United States Naval Attaché
ANZUS, Australia, New Zealand, United States
AP, Associated Press
AR, Annual Review (NATO)
ARK, Royal Cambodian Army
ARMA, Army Attaché
ARS, *Action Républicaine et Sociale*, French political party
AS, Associated States
ASF, Associated States Forces
ASIC, Associated States of Indochina
BN, battalion
BNA, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Department of State
C, Office of the Counselor of the Department of State
CAS, controlled American source
CAT, Civil Air Transport
CBS, Columbia Broadcasting System
CCAF, Chinese Communist Air Force
CCF, Chinese Communist Forces
CF, Conference File
CFM, Council of Foreign Ministers
CG, Commanding General
CGUSAF, Commanding General, United States Air Force
Chi, Chinese
ChiCom, Chinese Communist
Chi Commie(s), Chinese Communist(s)
CIA, Central Intelligence Agency
C-in-C, CINC, Commander in Chief
CINCUSAFE, Commander in Chief, United States Air Force Europe
CINCFE, Commander in Chief, Far East
CINCPAC, Commander in Chief, Pacific
CINCUNC, Commander in Chief, United Nations Command
circ, circular
cirtel, circular telegram
CNO, Chief of Naval Operations
CO, company
COCOM, Coordinating Committee on export controls, located in Paris
Codel, telegram series indicator for Congressional and Vice Presidential delegation travel
com, communications
Commie(s), Communist(s)
COMREP, Commissioner-Representative
ConGen, Consul General
Contel, Consulate telegram
Cotel, country team telegram
CP, Command Post; Communist Party
CPF, French Communist Party
CSA (CSUSA), Chief of Staff, United States Army
CY, calendar year
DA, Department of the Army
DBP, Dien Bien Phu
DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission
DefMin, Defense Minister
Depcirtel, Department of State circular telegram
DEPTAR, Department of the Army
Deptel, Department telegram
Div, division

DMS, Director of the Mutual Security Agency
DRV, Democratic Republic of Vietnam
Dulte, primarily a series indicator for telegrams from Secretary of State Dulles while absent from Washington; also used as series indicator for telegrams to him from the head of the United States Delegation at an international conference.
E, Bureau of Economic Affairs, Department of State
ECA, Economic Cooperation Administration
EDC, European Defense Community
ELaC, United States designation for documentation related to discussions with General Paul Ely, French High Commissioner and Commander in Chief in Indochina, and Guy La Chambre, Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States, at Washington, September 1954
Emb, Embassy
Embdesp, Embassy despatch
Embtel, Embassy telegram
EUR, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of State
EUR/P, Public Affairs Adviser, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of State
FAF, French Air Force
FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBIS, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FE, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State
FEACOM, Far East Command
FEAF, Far East Air Forces
FEC, French Expeditionary Corps
FECOM, Far East Command
FHA, Federal Housing Administration
FOA, Foreign Operations Administration
FOA/W, headquarters of the Foreign Operations Administration in Washington
FonAff, Foreign Affairs
FonMin, Foreign Minister
FonOff, Foreign Office
FPT, French political talks; United States designation for documentation related to discussions with René Mayer, Premier of France, at Washington, in March 1953
FRC, Federal Records Center
FSO, Foreign Service Officer
FTEO, French forces in the Far East
FVA, Free Vietnam Army
FY, fiscal year
FYI, for your information
G, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of State
G–2, Army general staff section dealing with intelligence at the divisional or higher level
G–3, Army general staff section dealing with operations and training at the divisional or higher level
GA, General Assembly of the United Nations
Gamos, pacification units employed by the State of Vietnam
GCA, ground-controlled approach
Gento, series indicator for telegrams from Defense representatives at the Geneva Conference to the Department of Defense
GHQ, General Headquarters
GM, *groupe mobile,* French regimental combat team
GMC, General Motors Corporation
GNP, Gross National Product
GOI, Government of India
GOP, Government of Pakistan
HC, High Commissioner
HCM, Ho Chi Minh
HICOM, High Commissioner
HM, His Majesty
HMG, Her (His) Majesty's Government (of the United Kingdom)
IAC, Intelligence Advisory Committee
IBRD, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IC, Indochina
ICC, International Control Commission
IE, Intelligence Estimate (Department of State)
IMF, International Monetary Fund

INR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
IO, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State
IS, International Staff (NATO)
ISA, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs
JCS, Joint Chiefs of Staff
KMAG (KMAAG), United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea
L, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State
LAT, United States designation for documentation related to discussions with Jean Letourneau, French Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States and High Commissioner in Indochina, at Washington, in March 1953
Legtel, Legation telegram
LFT, United States designation for documentation related to discussions with Jean Letourneau, French Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States and High Commissioner in Indochina, at Washington, in June 1952
LOC, line of communication
LST, landing ship, tank
MAAC, Mutual Assistance Advisory Committee
MAAG, Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAG, Military Advisory Group
maint, maintenance
MATS, Military Air Transport Service
MDA, Mutual Defense Assistance
MDAP, Mutual Defense Assistance Program
MEA, Ministry of External Affairs
med, medical
MilAtt, Military Attaché
MIN, minute
MN, Monetary Affairs Staff, Department of State
MRP, *Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, French political party
MSA, Mutual Security Act (of 1951); Mutual Security Agency; Mutual Security Assistance
MSA/W, Mutual Security Agency, Washington
msg, message
MSP, Mutual Security Program
Musto, series indicator for telegrams from the Mutual Security Agency in Washington to its missions abroad
mytel, my telegram
NA, Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Department of State
NAC, National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems; North Atlantic Council
NAT, North Atlantic Treaty
NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO, noncommissioned officer
niact, night action, communications indicator requiring attention by the recipient at any hour of the day or night
NIE, National Intelligence Estimate
noforn, no foreign dissemination
NSC, National Security Council
NZ, New Zealand
O, Office of the Under Secretary of State for Administration
OARMA, Series indicator for telegrams from the Office of the Army Attaché
OCB, Operations Coordinating Board
ODM, Office of Defense Mobilization
OIR/DRF, Division of Research for the Far East, Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State
OMA, Office of Military Assistance, Department of Defense
ON, Office of News, Department of State
ONI, Office of Naval Intelligence
OSD, Office of the Secretary of Defense
OSP, offshore procurement
P, Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State
PAO, Public Affairs Officer
PM, Prime Minister
POC, Peace Observation Commission
POL, petroleum, oil, lubricants
PriMin, Prime Minister

PPS, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State

PSA, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State

PSB, Psychological Strategy Board

PW, prisoner of war

R, Office of the Special Assistant for Intelligence, Department of State

RA, Office of European Regional Affairs, Department of State

RAF, Royal Air Force

RC, Route Coloniale

rcn, reconnaissance

RCT, regimental combat team

reftel, reference telegram

regt, regiment

ResMin, Resident Minister

ROK, Republic of Korea

RGR, *Rassemblement de Gauche Républicain* (Assembly of the Republican Left), French political party

RPF, *Rassemblement du Peuple Français* (Assembly of the French People), French political party

RTC, Replacement Training Center

SAC, Supreme Allied Commander

SC, Security Council of the United Nations

SCAP, Supreme Commander Allied Powers

SCEM, signing ceremonies in Europe; United States designation for documentation related to bipartite and tripartite meetings of the Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States at Paris in May 1952

SDECE, *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionage*, the French foreign intelligence service

SE, Special Estimate

SEA, Southeast Asia

SEAP, letters standing for "Southeast Asia Pact" were used as a series indicator for documents circulated in preparation for the Manila Conference

SEATO, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

Secto, series indicator for telegrams to the Department of State from the Secretary of State (or his delegation) in connection with international conferences

SFIO, *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*, the French Socialist Party

SHAPE, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

SIG, signal

Sitrep, situation report

S/MSA, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Mutual Security Affairs

SNIE, Special National Intelligence Estimate

SOA, Office of South Asian Affairs, Department of State

S/P, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State

S/S, the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State

S/S–RO, Reports and Operations Staff, Executive Secretariat, Department of State

S/S–S, Committee Secretariat Staff, Executive Secretariat, Department of State

STEM, United States Special Technical and Economic Mission

STF, United States designation for documentation related to bilateral talks with French officials during the Washington Foreign Ministers meeting of July 1953

SYG, Secretary-General

TAC, Tactical Air Command

TC, Division of Language Services, Department of State

TCA, Technical Cooperation Administration, Department of State

Tedul, primarily a series indicator for telegrams to Secretary of State Dulles while absent from Washington; also used as series indicator for telegrams from Dulles to the head of the United States Delegation at an international conference

Telac, series indicator for telegrams to Secretary of State Acheson during absences from Washington

TIAS, Treaties and Other International Acts Series

TO, Table of Organization

Tomac, series indicator for telegrams to the United States Delegation at the Tripartite Working Group in Paris, October–December 1953

Tomus, series indicator for telegrams to the Mutual Security Agency in Washington from its missions abroad

Tosec, series indicator for telegrams from the Department of State to the Secretary of State (or his delegation) in connection with international conferences

Tousfo, series indicator for telegrams and airgrams to the Foreign Operations Administration from missions abroad (*see* Usfoto)

trans, transportation

TS, Top Secret

USDR, *Union Démocratique et Socialiste de la Résistance*, French political party

UMDC, a Catholic militia organization in South Vietnam

UNA, Bureau of United Nations Affairs, Department of State

UNC, United Nations Command

UNCURK, United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea

UNGA, United Nations General Assembly

UNO, United Nations Organization

UNP, Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs, Department of State

UNTS, United Nations Treaty Series

UP, United Press

URAS, *Union des Républicians d'Action Sociale*, French political party

urtel, your telegram

USA, United States Army

USAF, United States Air Force

USARMA, United States Army Attaché

USDel, United States Delegation

Usfoto, series indicator for telegrams and airgrams from Foreign Operations Administration to missions abroad (*see* Tousfo)

USIA, United States Information Agency

USIS, United States Information Service

USMC, United States Marine Corps

USN, United States Navy

USNR, United States Naval Reserve

USOM, United States Operation Mission

UST, *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements*

USUN, U.S. Mission at the United Nations

VM, Viet Minh

VN, Vietnam, Vietnamese

VOA, Voice of America

WAM, United States designation for documentation related to the Washington ANZUS meeting of September 1953

WE, Office of Western European Affairs, Department of State

Weeka, weekly, interagency, summary analysis from United States diplomatic missions

WFTU, World Federation of Trade Unions

Wirom, series indicator for certain Department of State administrative telegrams

LIST OF PERSONS

Editor's Note.—Throughout this volume, individuals generally are identified in context as their names appear. This list is designed to provide ready reference for identification of those persons mentioned most frequently. The identification of the persons on this list is generally limited to positions and circumstances under reference in the volume and is confined to the years 1952–1954. All titles and positions are American unless otherwise indicated. Where no dates are given, the individual usually held the position throughout the period covered by the volume.

Acheson, Dean, Secretary of State to January 20, 1953.

Achilles, Theodore C., Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy in France from April 1, 1952; Minister of the Embassy in France from August 25, 1954.

Adams, Sherman, Assistant to the President from January 20, 1953.

Aldrich, Winthrop W., Ambassador in the United Kingdom from February 20, 1953.

Allen, George V., Ambassador in Yugoslavia to March 11, 1953; Ambassador in India from May 4, 1953.

Allison, John M., Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, to January 31, 1952; Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, February 1, 1952–April 7, 1953; Ambassador in Japan from May 28, 1953.

Anderson, Robert B., Secretary of the Navy from February 4, 1953; Deputy Secretary of Defense from May 3, 1954.

Armstrong, W. Park, Special Assistant for Intelligence, Department of State.

Auriol, Vincent, President of France to December 24, 1953.

Bao Dai, Chief of State of Vietnam.

Bidault, Georges, French Minister of National Defense to March 8, 1952; Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 8, 1953–June 18, 1954; Head of the French Delegation to the Geneva Conference, April 26–June 18, 1954.

Bohlen, Charles E., Counselor of the Department of State and Member, Senior Staff, National Security Council, to March 1953; Ambassador in the Soviet Union from April 20, 1953.

Bonbright, James C. H., Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs; from April 1954, Special Assistant to the Permanent Representative in Europe.

Bonesteel, Brigadier General Charles H., III, USA (Colonel to January 24, 1954), Assistant for National Security Council Affairs, Department of Defense, and Defense Member on the NSC Planning Board, from June 1953.

Bonnet, Henri, French Ambassador in the United States.

Bonsal, Philip W., Counselor of Embassy in France to March 1952; Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, from August 1952.

Bowie, Robert R., Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, and State Member on the National Security Council Planning Board from May 18, 1953.

Bradley, General of the Army Omar N., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to August 14, 1953.

Brink, Brigadier General Francis G., USA, Chief, United States Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina; died June 24, 1952.

Bruce, David K. E., Ambassador in France to March 10, 1952; Under Secretary of State, April 1, 1952–January 20, 1953; Consultant to the Secretary of State to February 18, 1953; thereafter, Observer at the Interim Committee of the European Defense Community at Paris, and Representative to the European Coal and Steel Community.

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Buu Loc, Prince, cousin of and adviser to Bao Dai, Chief of State of Vietnam; Bao Dai's Representative in Paris, 1952–1953; Prime Minister of Vietnam, December 17, 1953–June 16, 1954.

Cabell, Lieutenant General Charles Pearre, USAF, Director of the Joint Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff, to 1953; Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from April 23, 1953.

Cameron, Turner C., Jr., First Secretary and Consul at Saigon, September 1953–March 1954, and again from September 10, 1954; Consul at Hanoi, March–September 1954.

Chou En-lai, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China; Head of the People's Republic of China delegation at the Geneva Conference, 1954.

Churchill, Winston S. (Sir Winston from April 24, 1953), Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and First Lord of the Treasury.

Cogny, Général René, Commander of French Union Land Forces in Northern Vietnam, 1953–1954.

Collins, General J. Lawton, USA, Chief of Staff, United States Army, to August 14, 1953; U.S. Representative on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Military Group, August 1953–October 1954; Special Representative of the President in Vietnam with the rank of Ambassador from November 3, 1954.

Coty, René, President of France from December 23, 1953.

Cutler, Robert, Administrative Assistant to the President, January 21–March 22, 1953; thereafter, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Daridan, Jean, Minister, French Embassy in the United States, to July 1954; thereafter, French Deputy Commissioner-General in Indochina.

Davis, Vice Admiral Arthur C., USN, Deputy Representative on the Standing Group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 1952–August 1953; Director of the Office of Foreign Military Affairs, Department of Defense, from November 1953; also Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs from August 13, 1954.

Day, Henry B., Deputy Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, 1953–1954.

Dejean, Maurice, French Commissioner-General in Indochina, July 1953–June 1954.

De Castries, Colonel Christian (later Général), Commander of French Union forces at Dien Bien Phu.

De Lattre de Tassigny, Général d'Armée Jean, French High Commissioner and Commander of French Forces in Indochina, December 1950–November 1951; died January 1952.

Diem. *See* Ngo Dinh Diem.

Dillon, C. Douglas, Ambassador in France from March 13, 1953.

Drumright, Everett F., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, October 1953–October 1954.

Dulles, Allen W., Deputy Director of Central Intelligence to February 26, 1953; thereafter, Director of Central Intelligence.

Dulles, John Foster, Consultant to the Secretary of State to April 1952; Secretary of State from January 21, 1953.

Duncan, Admiral Donald B., USN, Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Dunn, James Clement, Ambassador in Italy to March 1[illegible], 1952; Ambassador in France, March 27, 1952–March 2, 1953; Ambassador in Spain from April 9, 1953.

Eden, Sir Anthony, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Eisenhower, Dwight D., General of the Army to July 1952; Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, to May 30, 1952; President of the United States from January 20, 1953.

Elbrick, C. Burke, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs from December 16, 1953.

Ely, Général Paul, French Member on the Standing Group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1952–1953; Chief of Staff of the French Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1953–1954; Commissioner-General and Commander of French Forces in Indochina from June 4, 1954.

Erskine, General Graves B., USMC (ret.), Director of the Office of Special Operations, Department of Defense, 1953–1954; Chairman of the Working Group of the President's Special Committee on Indochina.

Faure, Edgar, Prime Minister of France to March 8, 1952.
Fechteler, Admiral William M., USN, Chief of Naval Operations to August 16, 1953; thereafter, Commander in Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe.
Foster, William C., Deputy Secretary of Defense to January 20, 1953.
Franks, Sir Oliver, British Ambassador in the United States to February 1953.

George, Senator Walter F., Democrat of Georgia; ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee, 1953–1954.
Giao. *See* Pham Van Giao.
Giap. *See* Vo Nguyen Giap.
Gibson, William M., Deputy Director, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, 1952; First Secretary and Consul of the Embassy in France, from December 6, 1952.
Gifford, Walter S., Ambassador in the United Kingdom to January 23, 1953.
Gleason, S. Everett, Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.
Gruenther, General Alfred M., USA, Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe to July 11, 1953; thereafter, Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.
Gullion, Edmund A., Counselor of Embassy at Saigon, 1952; Member, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, from September 26, 1952.

Hagerty, James C., Press Secretary to the President from January 21, 1953.
Harriman, W. Averell, Director for Mutual Security to January 20, 1953.
Heath, Donald R., Ambassador (Minister to June 1952) at Saigon accredited to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Appointments terminated October (Cambodia) and November (Vietnam, Laos) 1954.
Hensel, H. Struve, General Counsel, Department of Defense, August 17, 1953–March 4, 1954; Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) from March 5, 1954.
Hickerson, John D., Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs to July 27, 1953.
Hinh. *See* Nguyen Van Hinh.
Ho Chi Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
Hoey, Robert E., Officer in Charge, Vietnam–Laos–Cambodia Affairs, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State.
Hoover, Herbert, Jr., Consultant to the Secretary of State from October 14, 1953; Under Secretary of State from October 4, 1954.
Howe, Fisher, Deputy Special Assistant for Intelligence, Department of State.
Hull, General John E., USA, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army, to October 6, 1953; thereafter, Commander in Chief, Far East, Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Far East, and Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, in Korea.
Humphrey, George M., Secretary of the Treasury from January 21, 1953.
Huu. *See* Tran Van Huu.
Huy Kanthoul, Prime Minister of Cambodia to June 15, 1952.

Jackson, C. D., Special Assistant to the President, February 16, 1953–March 31, 1954.
Jessup, Philip C., Ambassador at Large to January 19, 1953.
Johnson, Senator Lyndon B., Democrat of Texas; Member of the Armed Services Committee; Minority Floor Leader, 1953–1954.
Johnson, U. Alexis, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, 1952–1953; Counselor of Embassy in Czechoslovakia from December 31, 1953; Coordinator of the United States Delegation to the Geneva Conference, 1954.

Key, David McK., Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs (International Organization Affairs from August 25, 1954) from December 18, 1953.
Kidder, Randolph A., First Secretary and Consul at Saigon, June 1, 1953–July 22, 1954; Counselor of Embassy at Saigon from July 23, 1954.
Kimny. *See* Nong Kimny.

Knight, Ridgway B., Acting Deputy Director, Office of Western European Affairs, Department of State, 1952; Deputy Director, 1952–1954.

Knowland, Senator William F., Republican of California; Member of the Appropriations Committee and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy; Member of the Armed Services Committee, 1952, and the Foreign Relations Committee, 1953–1954; Senate Majority Leader, 1953–1954.

Kyes, Roger M., Deputy Secretary of Defense, February 2, 1953–May 1, 1954.

Labouisse, Henry R., Chief of the Mutual Security Agency Mission in France to July 1, 1953; Director of the Foreign Operations Administration Mission in France, 1953–1954.

La Chambre, Guy, French Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States from July 1954; French Delegate at the Geneva Conference of 1954.

Lacy, William S. B., Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, to July 1952; thereafter, Counselor of Embassy in the Philippines.

Laniel, Joseph, Prime Minister of France, June 28, 1953–June 19, 1954.

Lansdale, Col. Edward G., USAF, Member of the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Indochina, 1954; adviser to the armed forces and government of the State of Vietnam on internal security matters.

Lay, James S., Jr., Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.

Le Van Vien, Commander in Chief of the Binh Xuyen (Vietnamese sect).

Lemnitzer, Lieutenant General Lyman L., USA (Major General to August 1, 1952), Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Research, USA, from August 1, 1952.

Letourneau, Jean, French Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States until July 1953; also served as French High Commissioner in Indochina, April 1952–July 19, 1953.

Lodge, Henry Cabot, Jr., Republican Senator from Massachusetts, 1952; Representative at the United Nations from January 26, 1953.

Lovett, Robert A., Secretary of Defense to January 20, 1953.

MacArthur, Douglas, II, Counselor of the Embassy in France to October 15, 1952; Counselor of the Department of State from March 30, 1953.

MacDonald, Malcolm, Commissioner General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia.

Makins, Sir Roger, British Deputy Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to December 30, 1952; Ambassador in the United States from January 7, 1953.

Mansfield, Michael J., Democrat of Montana, Member of the United States House of Representatives, 1952; Senator (Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee), from January 1953.

Matthews, H. Freeman, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs to October 11, 1953; Ambassador in the Netherlands from November 25, 1953.

Mayer, René, Prime Minister of France, January 8–June 28, 1953.

McBride, Robert H., Officer in Charge of French-Iberian Affairs, Department of State, 1952–1954; First Secretary of the Embassy in France, from September 25, 1954.

McCardle, Carl W., Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs from January 30, 1953.

McClintock, Robert, Counselor of Embassy at Saigon from March 10, 1953, to August 1954; Ambassador in Cambodia from October 2, 1954.

Mendès-France, Pierre, French Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs from June 19, 1954.

Merchant, Livingston T., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Mutual Security Affairs to March 24, 1952; then Deputy Special Representative in Europe, at Paris, to March 11, 1953; Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs from March 16, 1953.

Millet, Pierre, Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States, to September 1954; thereafter, Minister.

Minnich, L. Arthur, Jr., Assistant Staff Secretary to the President from January 21, 1953.

Molotov, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union from March 1953; Chairman of the Delegation at the Geneva Conference, 1954.

Montllor, Joseph J., Second Secretary and Consul at Phnom Penh, April 28, 1952–July 6, 1954.

Morton, Thruston B., Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations from January 30, 1953.

Murphy, Robert D., Ambassador in Belgium to March 19, 1952; Ambassador in Japan, May 9, 1952–April 28, 1953; Political Adviser to the United Nations Command on Korean Armistice Negotiations, April 28–July 11, 1953; Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs from July 28, 1953, to November 30, 1953; thereafter, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Nash, Frank C., Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs to February 10, 1953; Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), February 11, 1953–February 28, 1954.

Navarre, Général Henri, Commander in Chief of French Union Forces in Indochina, May 1953–June 1954.

Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, Prime Minister of India and Minister for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.

Ngo Dinh Diem, Vietnamese nationalist Catholic leader; Prime Minister, Minister of National Defense, and Minister of the Interior of the State of Vietnam, from June 16, 1954.

Nguyen De, Adviser to Bao Dai, Chief of State of Vietnam; Chief of the Imperial Cabinet.

Nguyen Huu Tri, Governor of Northern Vietnam, 1952–1954; leader of the Dai Viet (Vietnamese political party).

Nguyen Van Hinh, Chief of Staff of the Army of the State of Vietnam, 1953–1954; son of Nguyen Van Tam.

Nguyen Van Tam, Minister of the Interior of the State of Vietnam and Acting Governor of Northern Vietnam to June 3, 1952; Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam, June 3, 1952–December 17, 1953.

Nhiek Tioulong, General, Cambodian Director of Information, 1952; Minister of Public Works, 1953; Minister of Defense, 1954; Head of the Cambodian Military Delegation at the Geneva Conference, 1954.

Nitze, Paul H., Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, to April 1953.

Nixon, Richard M., Republican of California, Senator, 1952; Vice President of the United States from January 20, 1953.

Nolting, Frederick E., Jr. Special Assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary of State, 1952–1953; Acting Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Mutual Security Affairs from August 4, 1953; Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Mutual Security Affairs from January 4, 1954.

Nong Kimny, Cambodian Ambassador in the United States from July 1, 1952.

Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia.

O'Connor, Roderic L., Assistant to the Secretary of State from January 21, 1953; Special Assistant from February 21, 1954.

O'Daniel, Lieutenant General John W., USA, Commanding General, United States Army, Pacific, September 1, 1952–April 1954; Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina, from April 12, 1954.

Offroy, Raymond, Diplomatic Counselor to the French High Commissioner in Indochina, 1952–1953; Deputy Commissioner-General, 1953–1954; French Ambassador in Thailand from May 1954.

Ogburn, Charlton, Jr., Regional Planning Adviser, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, October 1952–September 1954.

Ohly, John H., Assistant Director (Deputy to the Director) for Program, Office of the Director of Mutual Security, 1952–1953; Deputy Director for Program and Planning, Foreign Operations Administration, 1953–1954.

Ourot Souvannavong, Laotian Minister in the United States from July 13, 1953; Laotian Delegate at the Geneva Conference of 1954.

Pace, Frank, Jr., Secretary of the Army from January 20, 1953.

Partridge, General Earle E., USAF (Lieutenant General to April 1, 1954), Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, United States Air Force, June 30, 1953–March 31, 1954; thereafter, Commanding General, United States Far East Air Forces.

Penn Nouth, Prime Minister of Cambodia, 1953–1954.

Perkins, George W., Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs to January 31, 1953.

Persons, Major General Wilton B., USA, Special Assistant to the President from January 21, 1953.

Pham Van Giao, Deputy Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam, 1952; Governor of Central Vietnam, 1953–1954.

Phleger, Herman, Legal Adviser, Department of State, from February 2, 1953.

Pinay, Antoine, Prime Minister of France, March 8, 1952–January 8, 1953.

Pleven, René, Prime Minister of France to January 1952; Minister of National Defense, March 8, 1952–June 19, 1954.

Radford, Admiral Arthur W., USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific, and U.S. Pacific Fleet, to July 10, 1953; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from August 15, 1953.

Raynor, G. Hayden, Director of the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Department of State.

Ridgway, General Matthew B., USA, Commander in Chief, Far East and Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, to May 1952; Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, June 1952–May 1953; Chief of Staff, United States Army, from August 15, 1953.

Robertson, Walter S., Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs from April 8, 1953.

Sainteny, Jean, French Delegate General in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from September 1954.

Salan, Général Raoul, Commander of French Forces in Indochina, April 1, 1952–May 1953.

Savang Vatthana, Crown Prince of Laos.

Schuman, Robert, French Minister of Foreign Affairs to January 8, 1953.

Schumann, Maurice, French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to June 1954; Deputy Chairman of the French Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

Scott, Walter K., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Administration to March 21, 1954; thereafter, Director of the Executive Secretariat.

Sihanouk. *See* Norodom Sihanouk.

Sisavang Vong, King of Laos.

Smith, General Walter Bedell, USA, Director of Central Intelligence to February 9, 1953; Under Secretary of State, February 9, 1953–October 1, 1954.

Souphanouvong, Prince, Laotian resistance leader; half-brother of Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma.

Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister of Laos.

Souvannavong. *See* Ourot Souvannavong.

Stassen, Harold E., Director for Mutual Security from January 20, 1953; Director for Foreign Operations from August 1, 1953.

Stennis, Senator John C., Democrat of Mississippi; Member of Senate Armed Services Committee.

Stevens, Robert T., Secretary of the Army from February 4, 1953.

Stewart, Major General George C., USA, Director of the Office of Military Assistance, Department of Defense, from March 1, 1953.

Sturm, Paul J., Consul at Hanoi, February 21, 1952–October 7, 1954.

Tam. *See* Nguyen Van Tam.

Tran Van Do, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Vietnam from June 16, 1954; Head of the State of Vietnam Delegation at the Geneva Conference, June 16–July 21, 1954.

Tran Van Huu, Prime Minister of Vietnam to June 3, 1952.

Tran Van Kha, Ambassador of Vietnam in the United States from July 1, 1952.

Trapnell, Major General Thomas J. H., USA (Brigadier General to May 1, 1953), Chief of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina, August 1, 1952–April 1954.

Tri. *See* Nguyen Huu Tri.

Truman, Harry S., President of the United States to January 20, 1953.

Twining, General Nathan F., USAF, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, 1952–1953; Chief of Staff from June 30, 1953.

Valluy, Général Jean E., Deputy Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe, 1952–1953; Chief of the French Military Mission and French Member of the NATO Standing Group in Washington, 1953–1954.

Vandenberg, General Hoyt S., USAF, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, to June 29, 1953.

Van Fleet, General James A., USA, Commanding General, United States Eighth Army, in Korea, to February 11, 1953.

Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of Defense and Vice Premier of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; Commander in Chief of the People's Army of Vietnam.

Wilson, Charles Erwin, Secretary of Defense from January 28, 1953.

Yost, Charles W., Minister in Laos from November 1, 1954.

Young, Kenneth T., Far Eastern Specialist, Department of Defense, 1952; Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, March 1952–September 1954; Acting Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs from September 13, 1954.

POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA DURING THE PERIOD OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, APRIL–JULY 1954: U.S. CONCERN REGARDING THE MILITARY ASCENDANCY OF THE VIET MINH; PLANNING FOR THE POST-GENEVA PERIOD

Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers

Hagerty Diary, April 26, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

. . . .

Indo China—The President said that the French "are weary as hell"—he said that it didn't look as though Dien Bien Phu could hold out for more than a week and would fall possibly sooner—Reported that the British thought that the French were not putting out as much as they could, but that he did not necessarily agree with their viewpoint. "The French go up and down every day—they are very voluble. They thing [*think*] they are a great power one day and they feel sorry for themselves the next day." The President said that if we were to put one combat soldier into Indo China, then our entire prestige would be at stake, not only in that area but throughout the world—The President said the British are worried about Hong Kong and hope it will be left alone. They are fearful that if they move in Indo China the Chinese Reds will move against Hong Kong and could take it easily—"My argument to the British has been that if we all went in together into Indo China at the same time, that would be fine but if they don't go in with us, they don't expect us to help them defend Hong Kong. We must have collective security or we'll fall."—The President said the situation looked very grim this morning but that he and Dulles were doing everything they could to get the free countries to act in concert. In addition, he said "there are plenty of people in Asia, and we can train them to fight well. I don't see any reason for American ground troops to be committed in Indo China, don't think we need it, but we can train their forces and it may be necessary for us eventually to use some of our planes or aircraft carriers off the coast and some of our fighting craft we have in that area for support."

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[1] The extracts printed here comprise Press Secretary Hagerty's diary entry on discussion of Indochina at a White House meeting with Republican legislative leaders held on Apr. 26 at 8:30 a. m. Those present were the President; Vice President Nixon; Senators William F. Knowland of California, Homer Ferguson of Michigan, Eugene D. Millikin of Colorado, and Styles Bridges of New Hampshire; Representatives Joseph M. Martin, Jr., of Massachusetts (Speaker), Charles A. Halleck of Indiana, Leslie C. Arends of Illinois, and Leo E. Allen of Illinois; and Sherman Adams, Wilton B. Persons, Robert Cutler, Arthur Minnich, Hagerty, and other members of the White House staff. With regard to this meeting, see also memorandum by Minnich, *infra*; editorial note, p. 1414; and telegram Tedul 16 to Geneva, Apr. 28, containing a summary by Cutler of the principal points made by the President, vol. XVI, p. 599.

. . . .

The discussion then came back to the international situation, and the President said that what American policy was doing was "gambling thousands to save billions." He re-emphasized that Indo China was worse now than ever before despite the fact that the French troops were fighting magnificently—"200,000 fine French troops in Indo China."—The President said he was not "advocating any additional troops for Indo China, not as a single partner of the French—must keep up pressure for collective security and show determination of free world to oppose chipping away of any part of the free world"—"Where in the hell can you let the Communists chip away any more. We just can't stand it."—Nixon and Millikin then said that we should have a real understanding with our allies and if they go back on us, then we would have to review the situation again—The President said "if allies go back on us, then we would have one terrible alternative—we would have to attack with everything we have." He said he had more confidence in the British standing up because he believed that they had finally awakened to the fact that they cannot hold Hong Kong much longer if the Chinese want to take it—Knowland said that he thought we ought to get a thorough briefing on Russian atomic potential now and four years from now—Millikin said if our allies deserted, we would have to go back to fortress America. President angrily ended the discussion by saying "Listen, Gene, if we ever come back to fortress America, then the word 'fortress' will be entirely wrong in this day and age. Dien Bien Phu is a perfect example of a fortress. The Reds are surrounding it and crowding back the French into a position where they have to surrender or die. If we ever came back to the fortress idea for America, we would have, as I said before, one simple, dreadful alternative—we would have to explore an attack with everything we have. What a terrible decision that would be to make."

Riding back with the President from Chamber of Commerce greetings, discussed with him press conference for this week[2]—We both agreed that it would be particularly necessary to have one in order to answer and clear up questions on Indo China and Geneva Conference.

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[2] Regarding the President's news conference of Apr. 29, see editorial note, p. 1430.

Will try to emphasize that we have won a great victory at Geneva by refusing to recognize Red China and that Foster Dulles has followed American policy in refusing to yield to Russia's seating plans—With regard to Indo China we will try to point out as strongly as possible that all is not lost if Dien Bien Phu falls, which probably it will within a week.

Eisenhower Library, White House Office, "Legislative Leadership Conference"

Memorandum by the Assistant Staff Secretary to the President (Minnich)[1]

[Extract]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON, undated.]

. . . .

At the April 26th Conference,[2] the President reported again on the Indo China situation. He referred vaguely to French worries and lack of fixed purpose, noted that Dienbienphu was within two or three days of its fall, then recalled our past attempt to get a collective approach by the allies to the problem. As we saw it, this approach would have to be free of any implication of colonialism as well as any implication that the United States would carry alone the burden of defense of the free world.

The President then noted repeated requests for U.S. participation, such as the use of our B–29's. He asserted that anything to be done would have to be on the basis of the free world against the forces of enslavement, not as a simple contest for power between the United States and Russia. Because of the difficulty of getting agreed action under these terms, he feared that the situation might have a very serious outcome. Most recently, he said, there has been talk of a general cease fire, and in the last twenty-four hours both Bidault and the British have been taking a stronger stand. The latter, of course, were concerned over Hong Kong, and they realized that they could not hope for assistance in preserving Hong Kong unless they helped to save Indo China. The immediate effort of the United States was focussed on getting agreement of the several governments concerned for a plan of action which could then be discussed with the several legislative bodies of those nations involved. He concluded by saying that he did not foresee entry of American ground forces in the conflict.

The subject was revived later in the meeting following reference to a newspaper editorial which expressed alarm over the prospect of the

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[1] For information on this memorandum, see footnote 1, p. 1023.

[2] The discussion on Indochina at this meeting is further documented in the extract from the Hagerty Diary, *supra*; editorial note, *infra*; and in telegram Tedul 16 to Geneva, Apr. 28, vol. XVI, p. 599.

United States getting into the Indo China war. The President undertook to explain the diplomatic situation as one where we were attempting to get what we wanted at the least cost. Again he praised the magnificent resistance put up by the French at Dienbienphu. If that fight were lost, as it soon appeared to be, there would still be the job of holding back the Communists in the rest of Indo China, and it would certainly be inadvisable to risk the loss of 200,000 French troops. One leader interrupted to recall the request for Congressional concurrence in sending 400 technicians to Indo China. The President then commented on how hard decisions were when it was a matter of doing unpleasant things that are not properly understood. Frequently it was a matter of doing small things quickly to avoid having to make larger commitments later on. He saw Indo China as constituting a dilemma for there was no end to the fighting in sight, yet the alternative of losing Indo China could be worse. He was sure that it boiled down to a matter of making fine judgments as to what seemed in the best interest of the nation. He thought one of the functions of the groups like the leadership conference was to see where "our best bet is to be had", then go on to consult with others.

The President continued to the effect that he hated to see all action bogged down on one detail and that he thought it was a matter of finding the cheapest way out of the dilemma. He made clear that he was not advocating the commitment of U.S. ground forces. Actually, he believed, it would be a great mistake for the United States to enter the fray in partnership only with the French. United action by the free world was necessary, and in such action the U.S. role would not require use of its ground forces.

One leader then suggested that the Administration would be equally criticized if it were not calling attention to the danger of losing Indo China. The President agreed and recalled what was said about the failure of the Democrats to face up to the situation in China. Then he asserted our determination to lead the free world into a voluntary association which would make further Communist encroachment impossible.

One comment was then forthcoming from the leadership concerning criticism of Mr. Acheson for his 1950 statement about how Korea was not strategically vital to U.S. interests and another comment focussed on the undesirability of committing U.S. forces. The President noted how one step followed another in an evolving situation, increasing the need for Executive-Legislative consultation such as this. He hoped the group would not lose sight of the tremendous overall problem and potential future consequences. He felt that the group should not undertake to make final decisions, and that it should certainly not foreclose the possibility that some units might have to be sent in.

A Senator then expressed his feeling that eventually we must face a showdown as to whether we meant to resist the Chinese or not. If the United States should fail to achieve an allied effort, and if we did not mean to resist by ourselves, then the quicker we could disengage the better off we would be. The President replied only in terms of how serious would be the consequences if our allies ever went back on us, especially since it is no longer possible to fight just a defensive war and overseas bases are necessary for offensive war. Then, when the Senator referred to the "damn fool Fortress America idea", the President ventured a prediction: should the United States ever have to fall back to that idea, the country could narrow its thinking to a single event—the explosion of the Fortress.

Once more, before this meeting concluded, the President referred to the subject. He reported from a message just received from Sec. Dulles that the latter was somewhat downcast over a rather negative response from the British in regard to (our proposal for united action?).[3]

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[3] Reference is presumably to telegram Dulte 5 from Geneva, Apr. 25, which summarized a meeting between Secretary Dulles and Foreign Secretary Eden held that day. For the memorandum by Dulles of that conversation, see vol. XVI, p. 553. For text of Dulte 5, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pp. 388–389.

Editorial Note

Vice President Nixon made the following diary note on President Eisenhower's meeting of April 26, 1954, with Republican Congressional leaders:

"Charlie Halleck, during the course of the discussion, said that the suggestion that American boys might be sent to Indochina 'had really hurt,' and that he hoped there would be no more talk of that type. The President, however, immediately stepped in and said he felt it was important that we not show a weakness at this critical time and that we not let the Russians think that we might not resist in the event that the Communists attempted to step up their present tactics in Indochina and elsewhere. He said that we had to think of whether it was best to take a strong stand now when we could or wait until later when we could not. He also pointed out that it was not well to tell the Russians everything as to what we would or would not do." (*Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, page 153)

For other accounts of the session of April 26, see memorandum by Minnich, *supra*, and extracts from the Hagerty Diary, page 1410.

751G.00/4-2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT PARIS, April 26, 1954—6 p. m.

4073. Repeated information niact Geneva 128. Raymond Aron of *Figaro* came to see me this afternoon, saying that he wished, as a long time friend of the US, to describe to me the situation as he saw it. He said that the last time he had been to see the American Ambassador was the day after the invasion of South Korea, and that he felt that today was even more significant in world history.

He said that it was essential that the US intervene immediately with armed force in Indochina. He said that it was certain that Dien-Bien-Phu would fall in any event and that unless there was US intervention it was very likely that this would be followed in short order by the fall of Hanoi. This latter would be due to disintegration of Vietnamese morale. US intervention, even on a modest scale, could right the balance and save Hanoi. Aron thought intervention would be effective even after the fall of Dien-Bien-Phu provided it came before the fall of Hanoi.

Such intervention, he said, would have an electrifying effect on France, and throughout Europe, and would be the only thing that could redress the balance at Geneva and make possible a successful negotiation there. If the US did not intervene in the immediate future, he felt that the present French Government would fall and be replaced by a neutralist government, which would not agree to any form of German rearmament. This, he recognized would endanger the whole concept of the NATO alliance. Such a weakening of NATO would in his opinion prepare the way for World War III.

Aron then said that our present publicly enunciated policy seemed to be that we refused to help France negotiate a peace in Indochina and at the same time denied active military assistance to France when they were no longer able to carry on themselves. This would not be understood by any Frenchman.

I pointed out that the Secretary had advanced the concept of joint action with the other countries interested in the area. Aron replied that if that means, as he had seen in the press, that we required British agreement before acting, then it would be quite clear that the US was not yet ready to assume the obligations and risks of world leadership. He said it was obvious that the British would have to follow any strong lead taken by the US.

He left after asking me to report his views as those of an average Frenchman, who was deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation, and after saying that he would be in daily hope of hearing that the President had announced his intention of delivering a personal message to the Congress on Indochina.

DILLON

790.5/4–2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT LONDON, April 26, 1954—7 p. m.

4725. Sent niact Geneva 43. Eyes only Secretary Dulles, Acting Secretary and Secretary of Defense and JCS from Admiral Radford. The position taken by the British chiefs of staff was in complete accord with that set forth by Mr. Eden delineated in Geneva's 66 to London (sent Department Dulte 5).[1] I endeavored to explain to them the same position as stated to Eden by Secretary Dulles (Geneva's 66 and 67).[2] It is my opinion that British chiefs of staff maximize the risks and potential requirements. They seem to minimize our collective capabilities. They are in accord with our appreciation of the serious future possibilities resulting from the loss of all or part of Indochina either through military action or negotiation. However they feel that they can hold Malaya both militarily and politically. I do not believe that they are squarely facing up to the prospects for Thailand, Burma and Indonesia or any part of Indochina that may temporarily be held by a possible Geneva settlement. The British chiefs did not relate the implications of the situation in Indochina to the future of EDC and effects on NATO. Their approach seems to be on a very narrow basis strictly in terms of local UK interest without regard to other areas of the Far East such as Japan.

I am having dinner with Sir Winston tonight[3] and will continue to state the position taken by Secretary Dulles with Mr. Eden, also emphasizing point that a united front including the US and France now might afford the only opportunity to take any positive action to save Southeast Asia from loss to the Communists one way or another.

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[1] Regarding telegram Dulte 5, see footnote 3, p. 1414.

[2] For text of telegram Dulte 7 from Geneva, repeated to London as telegram 67, Apr. 26, summarizing a Dulles–Eden conversation of that date, see vol. XVI, p. 570.

[3] Admiral Radford summarized his dinner conversation with Prime Minister Churchill in telegram JCS 960578 to Secretary of State Dulles at Geneva, Apr. 27. He reported that the position taken by the Prime Minister with regard to Indochina and united action in defense of Southeast Asia was in exact accord with the views of Eden as expressed to Dulles at Geneva. The Prime Minister, Radford stated, was aware of the serious implications of the declining French position, but was unwilling to commit British resources to collective action unless British territory, such as Malaya, was in immediate danger. (741.13/4–2754) For the complete text of telegram JCS 960578, see volume VI.

For Admiral Radford's account of his meeting with the Prime Minister as presented to the National Security Council, see memorandum of discussion at the 194th Meeting of the NSC, Apr. 29, p. 1431.

While I did not mention to the British chiefs the adverse effect on the US Congress and US public opinion of their not standing firmly with the United States, with the concurrence of Ambassador Aldrich I will make this point evident to Mr. Churchill tonight.

ALDRICH

751G.00/4-2654

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Bonbright)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] April 26, 1954.

Subject: United Action in South East Asia

Participants: Mr. Leslie K. Munro, New Zealand Ambassador
Mr. G. R. Laking, New Zealand Minister
The Acting Secretary of State
Mr. Bonbright, EUR

The Ambassador stated that the situation in Indo-China has changed considerably from the end of last week when he had hoped to see General Smith. In the meantime, he had heard from London of our proposal to the British that we would seek Congressional authority to intervene in Indo-China if the British went along. Mr. Munro wondered if General Smith was in a position to comment on this report.

The Acting Secretary stated that the situation had been discussed in Paris between the Secretary and Mr. Eden. Unfortunately so far, our suggestions had not been warmly received in London. President Eisenhower and our Congressional leaders feel that the United States should be willing to do anything it can to assist in this situation but that we cannot bear this responsibility alone. We are willing to do our share and more if our allies, particularly those who are closer to the danger, go along with us. We continue to be gravely concerned over the threat to South East Asia. The French have asked us for additional assistance but this we cannot give without Congressional approval. In General Smith's opinion, this approval would have been given by the Senate if we had been able, as we had tried to do, to get a joint declaration of intent. For reasons which we all knew, the meeting of the Ambassadors which we had planned for this purpose a week ago had had to be changed with the result that attendance was placed on a different basis and it became merely another briefing session. Frankly, we had been at a loss to know how this misunderstanding arose. It was only later that Mr. Eden give us the explanation that when he had discussed the matter with the Secretary in

London he had overlooked the impending Colombo conference. General Smith added that if this were so, it would have been helpful to us to have known it earlier so that we would not have had to improvise at the last moment. We thought that we would be faced with great difficulties if we could not deal with each other in confidence.

General Smith went on to say that Eden has now gone back to present our views to the British Cabinet. And, in addition to the political problem, there are apparent differences between the British Chiefs of Staff and our Joint Chiefs regarding the urgency of taking joint action and concerning the results which may be expected to follow our failure to act together. It was disappointing that we had not been able to make more progress during the past few days but we were at least encouraged by M. Bidault's informing us that there would be no cease-fire during the period of Geneva.

The General stressed the fact that we had no desire to coerce our allies or to give an ultimatum to China or to sabotage the Geneva conference. However, we were gravely concerned and felt that probably nothing could save Dien Bien Phu now, although courage and more ammunition might delay its fall. However, even if a major part of Indo-China were to be lost we must not accept the loss of all South East Asia.

General Smith then informed the Ambassador in confidence that the President had asked Admiral Radford to put the question to the British Chiefs of Staff whether they would prefer to approve action now when there is a French army fighting on the spot or wait until that army disintegrates or possibly is withdrawn. In any event, we will not relax our efforts and appreciate the support of our ANZUS allies.

Mr. Munro gave it as his personal view that the present situation had elements of similarity with that of 1936 in connection with the Rhineland. He thought that the key to the situation was France. Assuming that the UK agreed with us, how could we deal with the situation if the French still wanted to go through the Geneva discussion prior to considering united action. It seemed to him that by asking the US to intervene directly, the French had cut the ground out from under their own argument. General Smith stated that he did not know if he could give a precise answer to this question. As Mr. Munro knew, we had wanted a joint declaration of intention. If we had had it, we would have obtained a Congressional resolution authorizing the use of naval and air power. In appealing to us the French had said that even if we didn't save Dien Bien Phu, our intervention at this time would help morale and prevent a cease-fire all over Indo-China. In our view, a cease-fire would be disastrous and would lead ultimately to the complete withdrawal of the French. However, we still hoped to prevent this and to gain time for the formation of a coalition which would hold at least part of Indo-China and secure the rest of South East Asia. The General reiterated that the British position was the key to this situation and Mr. Munro said that the attitude of his government also depended on the British.

Mr. Munro concluded the conversation by stating that he would like to have us consider a meeting between himself, the General, and Sir Percy Spender, which could be publicized as an ANZUS meeting. General Smith stated that we all three seemed to be in agreement concerning the desirability of not allowing the ANZUS relationship to be submerged. He thought that such a meeting would be desirable and he asked Mr. Munro to speak to the Australian Ambassador and let him know their joint views.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

The President to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Gruenther)

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] April 26, 1954.

DEAR AL: I am most appreciative of your letter.[1] While I had some secondhand reports of your feeling that the French leaders had practically abdicated, I had not before known of your personal views with respect to the astonishing proposal for unilateral American intervention in Indo-China. Your adverse opinion exactly parallels mine.

As you know, you and I started more than three years ago trying to convince the French that they could *not* win the Indo-China war and particularly could not get real American support in that region unless they would unequivocally pledge independence to the Associated States upon the achievement of military victory. Along with this—indeed as a corollary to it—this Administration has been arguing that no Western power can go to Asia militarily, except as one of a concert of powers, which concert must include local Asiatic peoples.

To contemplate anything else is to lay ourselves open to the charge of imperialism and colonialism or—at the very least—of objectionable paternalism. Even, therefore, if we could by some sudden stroke assure the saving of the Dien Bien Phu garrison, I think that under the conditions proposed by the French the free world would lose more than it would gain. Neither the British nor the French would now agree with the coalition idea—though for widely differing reasons. Consequently, we have had to stand by while the tactical situation has grown worse and worse. Now, unless there should be a sudden development of discouragement on the part of the enemy, it looks as if Dien Bien Phu could scarcely survive. (Not that I, either as a local or a theatre commander, would ever agree to this. I believe that as long as the garrison can get food and ammunition, it *can* hold out. Of course it is not difficult to imagine conditions under which such re-supply would become impossible.)

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[1] Not identified.

One of the great difficulties that the French seem to have these days is the inability of its government to make up its mind as to what to do in any given set of circumstances. Ever since 1945 France has been unable to decide whether she most fears Russia or Germany. As a consequence, her policies in Europe have been nothing but confusion; starts and stops; advances and retreats! She wants still to be considered a world power, but is entirely unready to make the sacrifices necessary to sustain such a position. She prefers to limit her sacrifices and so, finally, she is bound to be shown up, as in Indo-China, as incapable of doing anything important by herself.

The result of this indecision has been tragic for her. She has been losing at one and the same time both her position as a world power and the sympathy and respect of free peoples.

For those of us who have recognized and admired the basic virtues of the great mass of Frenchmen, this spectacle has been saddening indeed. It seems incredible that a nation which had only the help of a tiny British Army when it turned back the German flood in 1914 and withstood the gigantic 1916 attacks at Verdun could now be reduced to the point that she cannot produce a few hundred technicians to keep planes flying properly in Indo-China.

I believe the difficulty is largely a matter of spirit; unfortunately there is no one in sight who seems to have the capability of reversing the trend toward pessimism, defeatism and dejection. As you will remember, you and I once thought that Pleven could possibly do it—now you report that he seems to be one of the most emphatic in proclaiming French futility.

The only hope is to produce a new and inspirational leader—and I do *not* mean one that is 6 feet 5 and who considers himself to be, by some miraculous biological and transmigrative process, the offspring of Clemenceau and Jeanne d'Arc.

Maybe, if you learn to speak French, you might qualify! I could get you a suit of nice shiny white armor!

In any event, it is all very frustrating and discouraging, but I do believe as follows:

(*a*). That the loss of Dien Bien Phu does not necessarily mean the loss of the Indo-China war.

(*b*). The heroic exploits of the French garrison (which are all the more wonderful in view of the weak support they have had from Paris) should be glorified and extolled as indicative of the French character and determination.

(*c*). We should all (United States, France, Thailand, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, et al) begin conferring at once on means of successfully stopping the Communist advances in Southeast Asia.

(*d*). The plan should include the use of the bulk of the French Army in Indo-China.

(*e*). The plan should assure freedom of political action to Indo-China promptly upon attainment of victory.

(*f*). Additional ground forces should come from Asiatic and European troops already in the region.

(*g*). The general security and peaceful purposes and aims of such a concert of nations should be announced publicly—as in NATO. Then we possibly wouldn't *have* to fight.

Augusta was fine, but I had to take a couple of grueling days out for the trip to New York and Kentucky. If you have any specific suggestions for our June encounter, let me know.

[Here follow personal remarks.]

As ever, [File copy not signed]

751G.00/4–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, April 27, 1954—noon.

4089. Repeated information niact Geneva 134. I think there is a direct connection between Pleven's request for assistance contained in Embassy's telegram 4085 [1] and statements made by Secretary to Laniel last Saturday (see Dulte 17).[2] During course of conversation with Laniel, Secretary at one point further defined phrase "next few weeks" referring to time required to bring military assistance to France in

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[1] In telegram 4085 from Paris, Apr. 26, not printed, Ambassador Dillon reported that Defense Minister Pleven had that evening entered a request with General Norstad for U.S. assistance in airfield construction in Indochina and for additional American transport aircraft and crews. Dillon and Norstad recommended that the requests be granted for political and psychological reasons. (751G.00/4–2654) For a memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense regarding the French requests, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pp. 392–394.

[2] For text of telegram Dulte 17 from Paris, Apr. 24, see p. 1394.

Indochina as being "maybe three, four or five weeks". I believe Laniel Government is making every effort to hold at Dien-Bien-Phu for at least three weeks in the hope that United States will be able to overcome internal political problems and find constitutional means of bringing military assistance to France in Indochina. I think request by Pleven in Embassy's telegram 4085 should be viewed in this light.

While French fully understand from Secretary that United Kingdom concurrence is a prerequisite for United States action, I am sure they hope that in last analysis United States will not maintain this position. French now know that United Kingdom aid will not be available in Indochina but they certainly hope that United States Government will not feel itself bound by this United Kingdom decision in reaching final determination whether or not to take action alongside French forces.

DILLON

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum for the Files by the President

[WASHINGTON,] April 27, 1954.

The situation at Dien Bien Phu looks a bit brighter than it has for the last ten days. Apparently there has been some re-supply of ammunition and of food, but so far as I know, the difficult problem of the care of the wounded has not been alleviated.

There has likewise been some evidence of a resurgence of French courage and determination. We just received a request for some perforated steel plate for two airfields and for some additional supplies of P.O.L. (Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants).[1] They want also a few experts in the laying of steel plate. In addition, they want a small quantity of earth-moving machines.

I have directed expeditious evaluation of our resources and of our legal authority also to comply with the requests at once. The Under Secretary of State is following this up and will let me know the result.

Latest reports from Foster Dulles indicate that the British have taken a very definite stand against any collective conversations looking toward the development of an anti-Communist coalition in South East Asia. Moreover, Eden has apparently gone to the Geneva Conference under strict instructions to press earnestly for a "cease fire" in Indo-China, possibly with complete indifference to the complex decisions that the French and the Viet Namese will have to make.[2]

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[1] See footnote 1, *supra*.

[2] For reports from Secretary Dulles regarding his discussions with Foreign Secretary Eden at Geneva, see vol. XVI, pp. 553 ff.

The only reason that we can visualize for such action is that the British are afraid that if the fighting continues we—and possibly other countries—might become involved and so tend to increase the danger, in the British opinion, of starting World War III.

The attitude of Britain in this respect is bitterly resented by Australia and New Zealand. It is entirely possible that these two countries will approach the United States separately to request that in company with them—and possibly with the Philippines, Thailand, France and Indo-China—we form a coalition to the complete exclusion of the British. This would be a very tough one for us, but I think that I would go along with the idea because I believe that the British government is showing a woeful unawareness of the risks we run in that region.

751G.00/4-2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the Department of State

SECRET LONDON, April 27, 1954—6 p. m.

4750. Repeated information Paris 653, Geneva 47. Geneva for Secretary. Referring to Churchill statement in House this afternoon,[1] Massigli [2] has just seen me at his request to tell me that he saw Churchill this morning at suggestion of Laniel to plead with Churchill to make a statement that Great Britain would act with US and France in supporting defense of Dien-Bien-Phu by French Union Forces. But Churchill has stated Great Britain was not prepared to do anything now which would affect situation at Geneva. Massigli stated nothing now possible for France except immediate commencement of negotiations for cease-fire. He said he felt Churchill and Cabinet had been influenced by fear of violent Labor Party opposition and reaction of India.

ALDRICH

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[1] Prime Minister Churchill delivered a policy statement on Indochina and the Geneva Conference in the House of Commons on Apr. 27, which included the following remarks: "Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to give any undertakings about United Kingdom military action in Indo-China in advance of the results of Geneva. We have not entered into any new political or military commitments. My right hon. Friend [Eden] has, of course, made it clear to his colleagues at Geneva that if settlements are reached there Her Majesty's Government will be ready to play their full part in supporting them in order to promote a stable peace in the Far East." For the complete statement, see *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 5th series, vol. 526, cols. 1455–1456.

[2] René Massigli, French Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

751G.00/4–2754: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, April 27, 1954—7 p. m.

4103. Repeated information Saigon 477, Geneva priority 137. Embassy officer discussed with Dac Khe this morning, implications communiqué issued April 25 by Cabinet Bao Dai at Paris.[1] Summary Dac Khe's views follows:

1. Status Franco-Vietnamese negotiations. Vietnamese have asked French delete certain phrase from proposed joint declaration of agreement (on independence Vietnam and its association with France) which, in Vietnamese view, tends nullify earlier expression in declaration regarding equality Franco-Vietnamese relationship. It presently appears that French are willing accept deletion this phrase and therefore, joint declaration should be issued shortly. However, basic treaties independence and association will not be signed prior completion related conventions which are now expected to be concluded in about 15 days. Nor are Vietnamese pressing for the initialing or signature basic treaties, which have been completed, prior conclusion these conventions. Although Bao Dai communiqué stated Vietnamese Government not prepared sign treaties until it has received concrete assurances from France that its independence and unity completely guaranteed, this not considered as conditioning issuance joint declaration which will be issued as soon final agreement reached above-mentioned point phraseology.

2. Franco-Vietnamese position on Geneva. French have failed coordinate fully or satisfactorily with Vietnamese Government on Geneva, and hence conclusion communiqué to effect that neither Bao Dai, nor Vietnamese Government will consider itself bound by any French decision taken Geneva contrary to interests Vietnam. French Government did not call permanent committee High Council French

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[1] The communiqué issued by the cabinet of Bao Dai on Apr. 25 expressed dissatisfaction with the progress of French-Vietnamese treaty negotiations. For an English language text of the communiqué, see Cameron, *Viet-Nam Crisis*, vol. I, pp. 241–243. For the French reply, issued the same day by the Secretariat of State for Relations with the Associated States, see France, Direction de la Documentation, *Chroniques d'Outre-Mer: Etudes et Informations, No. 5* (*May 1954*), p. 81. Despite the Vietnamese communiqué, France and the State of Vietnam issued a declaration on Apr. 28 undertaking to conclude two treaties, one affirming Vietnamese independence, the other defining relations between the two countries. For the text of the joint declaration, see *L'Année Politique, 1954*, p. 569. For the texts of the treaties, initialed in Paris on June 4 but never ratified, see *ibid.*, pp. 572–573. For English translations of the treaties, see Cameron, *Viet-Nam Crisis*, vol. I, pp. 268–271.

Union prior departure French delegation for Geneva as Vietnam requested; and although Bidault met with representatives of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos Saturday evening April 24, Vietnamese did not consider this as a "working session" or in any way meeting their desire for coordination French and Vietnamese positions on Geneva prior opening Conference. This failure satisfactorily coordinate in advance Franco–Vietnamese positions has given rise Vietnamese fear that French may agree to division Vietnam, or other measures at Geneva, in effect "selling out" Vietnam. Principal intent communiqué to manifest this fear and state why Vietnamese Government desires obtain French guarantees that France will not agree at Geneva to any division Vietnam, nor measure contrary its independence. As yet, Vietnamese Government has received no official indication from French Government this regard.

Regarding Vietnamese representation at Geneva, Vietnamese Government expects send several "unofficial observers" Geneva within several days, but no names mentioned as yet. "They may be Vietnamese who ostensibly must go Switzerland for medical treatment."

3. Battle Dien Bien Phu. If Dien Bien Phu falls, impact France will be far more serious than in Vietnam and it will be necessary for United States intervene with carrier-based aircraft and take on enlarged training role Vietnamese army if Vietnam to be saved from eventual Communist control.

Embassy comment: From tenor his comments, apparent Dac Khe hopes United States will lend support vis-à-vis France to Vietnamese position, opposing partition Vietnam, or any settlement likely lead ultimate Communist control Vietnam, along lines indicated Bao Dai communiqué. He stated Bao Dai leaving for Cannes at two this afternoon where he will remain temporarily. Dac Khe indicated that while this perhaps not propitious moment for contact with Bao Dai at Cannes by high United States official (possibly Ambassador Heath), such contact might be helpful later on.

Regarding Vietnamese criticism French lack "coordination" and failure call permanent committee High Council, in our opinion, Dac Khe's observations somewhat unjustified. We gained impression during Geneva preparation period that French officials taking particular care keep Vietnamese informed and to take into account their views. We attribute present Vietnamese reaction principally to fear of negotiated peace at Geneva, rather than to French failure "coordinate".

DILLON

751G.00/4-2954

The United States Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the President [1]

CONFIDENTIAL [NEW YORK, April 27, 1954.]

DEAR GENERAL: Your reference to the United Nations in your Chamber of Commerce speech [2] was excellent and it raises the question as to why there is not more talk about the United Nations in connection with the situation in Indochina.

Most of the stories coming out of Washington, beginning with the Vice President's interview, gave the impression that we are pondering a unilateral venture consisting practically entirely of United States forces.

I know that this is not your thought at all. Let me, therefore, call your attention concisely to the following advantages which would accrue if the Indochinese affair could be given a United Nations status:

1. Large numbers of Members of Congress and corresponding segments of American opinion would be pleased. (My own mail indicates this.)
2. It would give automatic and unquestioning assurance to the people of Indochina that they were at last *really independent.*
3. This would tremendously increase the fighting potential of the native Indochinese troops.
4. It would open the way to the obtaining of military help from other nations, chiefly with respect to manpower, which could mean a great deal.
5. It would forestall the communist propaganda line that the Indochinese struggle is a colonial war.

This would involve calling the General Assembly (which can be done in certain circumstances on twenty-four hours' notice) and the passage of an appropriate resolution at the General Assembly.

There are good and sufficient reasons why this has not been done in the past and it might well be a mistake to do it now while the Geneva Conference is in session. The French viewpoint and the French interest, of course, must be reconciled and taken into account.

But we certainly should be planning for it while the Geneva Conference is still in session and while we are trying to build up a united action front among the countries particularly interested in South East

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[1] The source text was transmitted by Ambassador Lodge to Assistant Secretary Key (UNA) with a note of Apr. 29 indicating that copies had also been sent to Secretary Dulles and Acting Secretary Smith. (751G.00/4-2954) No reply by the President has been found, but for the response by Secretary Dulles, May 10, see p. 1529.

[2] For text of the address by President Eisenhower at the annual meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce in Washington, Apr. 26, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pp. 421–424.

Asia. We should plan to do these things more or less concurrently not seriatim.

I have not discussed this letter with Foster Dulles, and am sending him a copy of it. But I have on many occasions discussed the general proposition with him and I know that he has always felt strongly that it would be most advantageous if the Indochinese matter could become a United Nations matter and has been hoping that the French viewpoint on this would change.

Faithfully yours, HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR.

Eisenhower Library, Whitman file, Name Series

The President to Captain E. E. Hazlett, Jr., USN (ret.)[1]

[Extract]

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] April 27, 1954.

DEAR SWEDE:

. . . .

In my last letter I remember that I mentioned Dien Bien Phu.[2] It still holds out and while the situation looked particularly desperate during the past week, there now appears to be a slight improvement and the place may hold on for another week or ten days. The general situation in Southeast Asia, which is rather dramatically epitomized by the Dien Bien Phu battle, is a complicated one that has been a long time developing. It involves many talks on the international level and the frantic desire of the French to remain a world power, but at the same time defeating themselves through their deep divisions and consequent indecisiveness at home.

For more than three years I have been urging upon successive French governments the advisability of finding some way of "internationalizing" the war; such action would be proof to all the world and particularly to the Viet Namese that France's purpose is not colonial in character but is to defeat Communism in the region and to give the natives their freedom. The reply has always been vague, containing references to national prestige, Constitutional limitations, inevitable effects upon the Moroccan and Tunisian peoples, and dissertations on plain political difficulties and battles within the French Parliament. The result has been that the French have failed entirely to produce any enthusiasm on the part of the Viet Namese for participation in the war. (Incidentally, did you ever stop to think that if the British had, in our War of the Revolution, treated as equals the Americans who favored them—whom they called Loyalists and we called Tories—the job of Washington would have been much more difficult, if not impossible. I have read that when the entire colonial forces in the field numbered not more than twenty-five thousand, that there were fifty thousand Americans serving in some capacity with and for the British. Yet no really effective service was rendered by these people because the British persisted in treating them as "colonials and inferiors.")

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[1] A personal friend of the President, with whom he corresponded frequently.

[2] In a letter to Hazlett of Mar. 18, the President had stated the following:

"The third major problem of the day is the increasingly bad situation in Indo-China. As you know, the Vietminh continue their assault on Dien Bien Phu, and the situation there becomes increasingly disturbing. I hope the French will have the stamina to stick it out; because a defeat in that area will inevitably have a serious psychological effect on the French. I suspect that this particular attack was launched by the Communists to gain an advantage to be used at the Geneva Conference. At any rate, it is just another of the problems that is dumped in my lap—in this particular case, of course, there is little I can do except to wait it out and hope for the best." (Eisenhower Library, Whitman file, Name Series)

In any event, any nation that intervenes in a civil war can scarcely expect to win unless the side in whose favor it intervenes possesses a high morale based upon a war purpose or cause in which it believes. The French have used weasel words in promising independence and through this one reason as much as anything else, have suffered reverses that have been really inexcusable.

The British are frightened, I *think*, by two things. First, they have a morbid obsession that any positive move on the part of the free world may bring upon us World War III. Secondly, they are desperately concerned about the safety of Hong Kong. For the moment the Chinese Communists are not molesting Hong Kong and the British are fearful that if they should be identified as opponents of the Communists in the Indo-China affair, they might suffer the loss of Hong Kong at any moment. All this is conjecture, but in respect to this particular point, my own view is in almost direct opposition. I personally feel that if the Communists would take a good smacking in Indo-China, they would be more likely to leave Hong Kong severely alone for a long time. Moreover, if a "concert of nations" should undertake to protect Western interests in this critical section of the globe, it would appear that Hong Kong would almost automatically fall within the protected zone.

Just what the outcome will be, of course, is still largely a guess, but in any event I feel that the situation is a shade—but only a shade—brighter than it was a week or so ago.

. . . .

As ever,

[File copy not signed]

Editorial Note

At 11:15 a.m., April 28, 1954, President Eisenhower held an off-the-record meeting at the White House with Walter Bedell Smith, the Acting Secretary of State; Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. This session, which presumably dealt with Indochina and the Geneva Conference, is mentioned in the Presidential Appointment Book (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records) and in the diary of Presidential Press Secretary James C. Hagerty (Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers). No record of the meeting has been found in Department of State files or at the Eisenhower Library.

Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers

Hagerty Diary, April 29, 1954

[Extracts]

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

In at 8:00—Presidential press conference at 9:00.[1]

In briefing with President went over in detail Geneva and Indo China, Oppenheimer, Stevens-McCarthy Hearings, and FHA. On Geneva President said, "How can I say much about it when Foster is having a hard enough job over there as it is." On Indo China the President said that he would discuss the situation in general outline only but would admit that the French have requested additional assistance from us—he also wanted to make it clear that British refusal to go along on assistance had nothing to do with our plans—"The French have built up Dien Bien Phu as a symbol and are trying to hold it against impossible odds. They are losing seasoned troops and most of the green reinforcements they are trying to parachute in. Navarre wouldn't take our advice—why I don't know—on ways to relieve Dien Bien Phu." President told me later than Navarre had sent only a small column for relief of Dien Bien Phu and that this column had been ambushed and cut to pieces—The French are also losing a lot of planes and paratroopers to Red anti-aircraft by stupidly radioing their positions in French as they approach the place, instead of using code. All the Viet Minh have to do is listen to the radio to find out when a drop is coming over the fortress, stand by and wait for it, and then let the flight have it.

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[1] **Regarding the President's news conference of Apr. 29, see editorial note, *infra*.**

Press conference went very well and the President was pleased at the end of it.

. . . .

Late in the afternoon went out on lawn with the President to hit some golf balls and we again renewed discussion of Indo China. He told me that NSC meeting[2] in the morning had been quite controversial but that decision had been reached to hold up for the time being any military action on Indo China until we see how Geneva coming along.

. . . .

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[2] For extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 194th Meeting of the National Security Council, Apr. 29, see p. 1431.

Editorial Note

At his news conference of April 29, 1954, 9 a. m., President Eisenhower was questioned extensively regarding Indochina and the Geneva Conference. The remarks he delivered in response included the following statements. He repeated that the United States would not become involved in war except through constitutional processes which included a declaration of war by Congress. Asked for his thoughts regarding a possible *modus vivendi* in Indochina, the President said that it was necessary to steer a course between the unacceptable and the unattainable. It was unacceptable for the anti-Communist defenses of Southeast Asia to be allowed to crumble entirely, yet it was beyond hope that a completely satisfactory solution could be achieved.

The President also expressed opposition to possible Congressional efforts to curb his powers to act in an emergency. He denied that a French request for air intervention had been refused at the urging of the British. The matter of what kind of help should be given to France had been discussed within the Executive Branch, and with legislative leaders. It was not subject to British veto. The President refused to say whether the French had requested intervention by planes flown by American pilots, citing the ongoing Geneva Conference. With regard to bipartisanship in the case of Indochina, he cited numerous meetings with leaders of both houses of Congress, including three in the month of April.

Finally, the President refused to endorse or reject partition as a solution to the conflict in Indochina. He stated that he did not intend to raise the defense budget as a whole as the result of the Indochina situation.

For the record of the news conference of April 29, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pages 427–438.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 194th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, April 29, 1954, 10 a. m.[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

The following were present at the 194th Meeting of the Council: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Acting Secretary of State; the Acting Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were Elbert P. Tuttle for the Secretary of the Treasury; Stanley N. Barnes for the Attorney General (Items 2 and 3); Samuel W. Anderson for the Secretary of Commerce (Item 1); the Acting Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (Item 4); the Administrator, Reconstruction Finance Corporation (Item 1); the Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers (Item 4); the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President (Items 1, 7 and 8); the White House Staff Secretary; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

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7. *Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security*

The Director of Central Intelligence stated that the intelligence community had just completed a National Intelligence Estimate on the consequences of the loss of Dien Bien Phu.[2] Its conclusions, some of which Mr. Dulles read to the Council, added up to the belief that from the military point of view the fall of the strong point would be very serious but not catastrophic. The political repercussions of the loss of the fortress would be more grave than the strictly military repercussions. Even so, the fall of Dien Bien Phu would not signal the immediate collapse of the French Union position in Indochina. In conclusion, Mr. Dulles pointed out that the intelligence report had had unanimous acceptance by all the agencies.

Admiral Radford, while admitting that the situation described in the Estimate was highly speculative, said the conclusions appeared to him overly optimistic. General Ely, for example, felt strongly that if Dien Bien Phu fell the whole Vietnamese army would melt away.

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[1] Prepared by S. Everett Gleason, Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, on Apr. 30. For Eisenhower and Nixon memoir accounts of this meeting, see editorial note, p. 1448.

[2] For text of NIE 63–54, "Consequences Within Indochina of the Fall of Dien Bien Phu," Apr. 30, see p. 1451.

In reply, Mr. Dulles stated that G–2 had actually wished to present more optimistic conclusions than those reached in the Estimate, and added that he himself had a feeling that, thanks to the way Dien Bien Phu had been played up in the press, we had all become a little panicky on the results of its fall. Mr. Dulles admitted, however, that anything could happen if the fall of Dien Bien Phu caused a psychological collapse.

Admiral Radford pointed out that General Cogny, who in the Admiral's opinion was an abler officer than General Navarre, was convinced that the Vietminh forces would infiltrate into the delta area very promptly after the fall of Dien Bien Phu. The French were likewise very fearful of Communist-inspired riots in the large towns of Indochina, as occurred in 1946.

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8. *Reports on the Geneva Conference and the Indochina Situation* (NSC Action No. 1086)[3]

Mr. Cutler first called on Secretary Smith to brief the Council on the latest news of the Geneva Conference.

Secretary Smith pointed out that the United States had entered the Geneva Conference with a lesser degree of common understanding and position with its allies than it had entered any previous international conference. When Secretary Dulles had gone to London and Paris before the opening of the Conference, it had looked as though he had obtained a meeting of minds. Such had not previously existed. At least this was the case with the British, even if the French remained very skeptical and pessimistic with respect to the effectiveness of Secretary Dulles' plan for a regional grouping in Southeast Asia. However, subsequent to the Secretary's return to Washington, the understanding with the British became unstuck, and the French position veered as a result of the change in the military situation in Indochina.

Secretary Smith then outlined Foreign Secretary Eden's present position on Indochina. This, in effect, stated that the British would support at Geneva any settlement satisfactory to the French Government and, indeed, would be prepared to discuss the possibilities of some kind of joint guaranty of such a settlement if reached at Geneva. They were unwilling, however, to make any commitments with respect to entering into a regional organization such as proposed by Secretary Dulles, at least until the conclusion of the Geneva Conference. This change of heart on the part of the British had been very disappointing to us, said Secretary Smith, since we had been counting on the British to help us buck up the French at Geneva. However, we could not change the British position, and Mr. Eden had become very irritated when Secretary Dulles attempted to do so.

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[3] See memorandum of discussion at the 192d Meeting of the National Security Council, Apr. 6, p. 1250.

The Secretary had had one talk with Molotov on Indochina,[4] and just a few hours earlier Secretary Dulles had sent in his latest appraisal of the situation as it confronted the U.S. at the present time. Secretary Smith then read Secretary Dulles' appraisal (April 29, 6:10 a. m.),[5] which contained the following main points.

> (1) There may be a change in the French Government after Dien Bien Phu falls, and after the members of the Chamber of Deputies return from their vacation. This change would probably result in a government further to the left, which would be committed to liquidate the French position in Indochina.
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> (2) The French plan to accept a settlement at Geneva which would permit them to hold certain enclaves in the delta, in the center of Vietnam, and in Cochin China. These enclaves would enjoy U.S. sea and air protection, and they would be used as areas in which indigenous forces could be trained. This would involve additional U.S. economic assistance. Admiral Davis believes that this French plan is not militarily feasible. But it seems the best hope of keeping France in the war. If France and the United States agree to support such a plan, Australia and New Zealand might go along with it, but the U.K. would initially try to prevent the adoption of such a plan. Thailand would join if U.S. action were prompt enough.
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> (3) The attitude of the Russian and Chinese Communists at Geneva makes Secretary Dulles feel that open U.S. intervention in Indochina would be more likely to be followed by open Chinese intervention, with the strong possibility that general war would result.
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> (4) The U.K. attitude is one of increasing weakness—fear of atomic attack has badly frightened them.
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> (5) Our allies are obviously very important to us, but Secretary Dulles believes that they will follow a strong and sound U.S. leadership, not necessarily a warlike one.

Secretary Smith commented that the last point made by Secretary Dulles, in favor of strong U.S. leadership, greatly appealed to him. Secretary Smith also read certain statements from the press ticker made by Chou En-lai, which were extremely truculent in tone and accused the United States of every imaginable outrage, including occupation of Chinese territory, namely, Formosa. Secretary Smith speculated as to whether the tone and content of Chou's remarks had not heightened Secretary Dulles' apprehension that the Chinese Communists would intervene in Indochina if the U.S. did.

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[4] The discussion was summarized by the Secretary in telegram Dulte 15 from Geneva, Apr. 27; for text, see vol. xvi, p. 579.

[5] Reference is to telegram Dulte 21 from Geneva; for text, see *ibid.*, p. 605.

The President stated that at his press conference earlier this morning he had been asked whether it was true that the British were preventing us from affording the assistance to the French which they desired. The President said that he had replied to this question by pointing out that we had done a great deal already to assist the French, although we had not provided combat assistance. He also pointed out that the British had had nothing whatever to do with our decisions with respect to assisting the French. The President then went on to say that in spite of the views of the Secretary of State about the need of leadership to bring the French and British along, he did not see how the United States, together with the French, could intervene with armed forces in Indochina unless it did so in concert with some other nations and at the request of the Associated States themselves. This seemed quite beyond his comprehension.

Secretary Smith said that the preliminary agreement between France and the Associated States had been signed at Paris yesterday. He was not as yet aware of the details and implications of this agreement, but with respect to other states concerting with the United States, he said that Thailand was already asking us to increase the level of our military assistance. While it was disappointing that Australia and New Zealand had withdrawn from their original favorable reaction to the Dulles plan, Secretary Smith said that it was quite possible that Australia and New Zealand would join the regional grouping after the conclusion of the national elections in Australia. Secretary Smith went on to point out his belief that the French would try to prevent the fall of Dien Bien Phu for three weeks at least, in the hope that during this period we would solve our "constitutional problems" and intervene with an air strike. The French want, if possible, to avoid a military debacle, and they realize that American intervention would have a highly salutary effect on French morale and French public opinion.

The Vice President inquired of Secretary Smith whether the French would actually be willing to settle at Geneva on the basis of a partition of Vietnam which would permit them only the three enclaves. Secretary Smith said that he could not reply with certainty to this question, since he knew nothing about the enclave plan beyond the fact that it had been studied by a pre-Geneva working group in Paris.

Mr. Cutler then called upon Admiral Radford to report to the Council on his conversations with Sir Winston Churchill, the British Chiefs of Staff, and French representatives in Paris and London between the 24th and 26th of April on the subject of Indochina.

Admiral Radford read his report from a written summary which had been prepared on the basis of memoranda of his various conversations. A copy of Admiral Radford's summary as read to the Council is filed with the minutes of the meeting.[6]

Admiral Radford said that he arrived in Paris on the afternoon of April 24 and immediately conferred with Secretary Dulles on the current attitudes of France and Britain toward Indochina. Thereafter, he and Secretary Dulles met with Anthony Eden.[7] Admiral Radford informed Mr. Eden of the views of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff with respect to the deteriorating situation in Indochina and the serious results which would ensue. In particular, he pointed out the U.S. view that Southeast Asia would not be militarily defensible after the loss of Indochina. Mr. Eden said that the presentation by Secretary Dulles painted a worse picture of the Indochina situation than the French had given to the British. He was therefore revising his plan to go directly to Geneva, and was returning to London that night in order to talk over the matter with the Prime Minister and the British Cabinet before proceeding to Geneva.

Admiral Radford saw Secretary Dulles again after the latter's conversation with Laniel, who again emphasized to the Secretary the seriousness of the French situation in Indochina and the urgent necessity of U.S. intervention to prevent a catastrophe.

At the urgent request of General Ely, the Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Radford met with him on Saturday night.[8] Ely stated that he came to Radford as a representative of the French Government as a consequence of a Cabinet meeting just ended. Apparently, said Admiral Radford, Ely had been sent to talk to him by Bidault and Pleven as one military man to another. Ely said that he came to ask for American intervention, realizing that such intervention could have no direct bearing on Dien Bien Phu. The point he wanted to stress was that American aid should be given before Dien Bien Phu fell, for the psychological effect in France and in Indochina, and to prevent deterioration. He added a personal opinion that the French Cabinet included a few strong members—Laniel, Bidault and Pleven. The balance of the Cabinet was weak. He was not optimistic as to the number of days Dien Bien Phu could hold out. He therefore urged prompt action by the U.S., and inferred that refusal of the

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[6] No copy of the summary has been found in Department of State files or at the Eisenhower Library. The files of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff contain a six-page document dated Apr. 28 which presumably is that read by Admiral Radford. It is titled "Résumé of Conversations with French and British Representatives by Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Paris and London, 24–26 April 1954 on the Subject of Indochina." (CJCS 091 Indo-China)

[7] See memorandum of the Dulles–Radford–Eden conversation at Paris, Apr. 24, p. 1386.

[8] Admiral Radford reported on his meeting with General Ely in telegram 4060 from Paris, Apr. 25, p. 1402.

United States to render aid at this critical time could have severe implications for future relations between France and the United States.

Admiral Radford said he reported this conversation to Ambassador Dillon, who passed it on to Secretary Dulles with his interpretation. Dillon felt that the leaders of the French Government had never informed the full Cabinet of their request for U.S. armed intervention which had been made by the stronger individuals who were willing to take responsibility for the request on the basis that everything possible must be done to save Dien Bien Phu. Dillon felt that if such aid were given the French they would continue to fight in Indochina regardless of the outcome. If such aid were not rendered, it would become public knowledge and involve a very adverse reaction from French public opinion. This, in Dillon's view, would result in the overthrow of the Laniel government and its replacement by a government which would pledge to withdraw from Indochina.

Admiral Radford said he had discussed this conversation with General Ely and with General Gruenther, who stated that he had never observed the morale in high French governmental circles to be so low as at the present time.

On Monday, Admiral Radford arrived in London to meet with the British Chiefs of Staff.[9] He was met by Ambassador Aldrich, who informed him of the British decision not to take any action now, but to await the outcome of the Geneva Conference.

The analysis of the British Chiefs on the situation in Indochina was largely in accord with that of the U.S. Chiefs, particularly with respect to our appreciation of the serious possibilities resulting from the loss of all or part of Indochina either through military action or negotiation. The British Chiefs, however, seemed to maximize the risks of expanding the war by intervention at this time, as well as the requirements for ground forces to be furnished by the Western powers to achieve a victory. They seemed confident of being able to hold Malaya in any event, and their approach to the Indochina problem seemed strictly and narrowly in terms of local U.K. interest, without adequate regard for the future of other areas of the Far East, including Japan.

On Monday evening, Admiral Radford dined with the Prime Minister at Chequers.[10] The Prime Minister took the same line as that taken by the British Chiefs of Staff and Mr. Eden. He is aware of the serious implication stemming from the deterioration of the French position in Indochina and the later loss of all the other areas of Southeast Asia. He realized that this would probably lead to a worsening of the French position in North Africa and have its effects on NATO, particularly in case a more neutralist-minded government came to power in France.

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[9] For Admiral Radford's report on his meeting with the British Chiefs of Staff, see telegram 4725 from London, Apr. 26, p. 1416.

[10] Regarding the meeting, see footnote 3, *ibid.*

While deploring these possibilities, the Prime Minister was determined to commit forces and incur risks only to hold Malaya, both politically and militarily. This he felt could be done. He brushed aside the potential threat to Australia in the event that Indonesia fell into the Communist camp, and he did not seem to appreciate the effect of the loss of Southeast Asia on the future of Japan.

In connection with NATO, the Prime Minister stated that we had waited long enough for the French to make EDC a reality. Therefore the U.K. and the U.S. should "get on" with rearming the Germans themselves.

The Prime Minister repeatedly referred to the loss of India to the Empire, making the point that since the British people were willing to let India go, they would not be interested in holding Indochina for France. He discoursed at length on the atomic threat to the U.K., which he cited as a factor which required the utmost caution in dealing with the situation in the Far East. He favored a personal and intimate conversation between President Eisenhower, Malenkov and himself, as the only way to settle the big problems of the world.

Admiral Radford said he gathered the distinct impression that Sir Winston was presently unprepared to participate in collective action on any matter involving commitments of British resources or incurring any risks unless some British territory is under imminent threat. His personal appraisal of action which can be taken to halt the spread of world communism seems now limited to talks, as he says, "at the summit". Whether this stems from a personal conviction, a real fear of atomic attack on Britain, or a fear that the British people will not approve a stronger course of action, Admiral Radford said he did not know.

At the conclusion of the reading of this summary statement, Admiral Radford went on to brief the Council on the military situation in Indochina, with the aid of maps and charts. He first spoke of "Operation Atlante" in the southern part of Indochina. This operation had not only come to a standstill; the French were actually on the defensive and in some trouble.

Two Vietminh battalions had made an incursion into Cambodia ten days ago and had caused consternation.

Vietminh action in the delta area had been concentrated against communications, especially those linking Hanoi and Haiphong. One whole Vietminh division had recently infiltrated the delta.

With respect to the situation at Dien Bien Phu, Admiral Radford pointed out that the area now held by the French had shrunk to about 1500 yards in diameter, making it very difficult to drop supplies to the garrison. He estimated the garrison's minimum requirements for supplies at about 200 tons a day. He estimated the total French casualties to be about 5500. There were nearly 1000 litter cases being cared for in underground dispensaries. There were 2000 walking wounded who were able to make some contribution to the defense of the position. The French forces were now estimated to total about 8500 infantrymen and 1200 artillerymen. Against this force the Vietminh had marshalled an estimated 40,000. General Navarre feels that the Vietminh will succeed in taking Dien Bien Phu by asphyxiation, and Admiral Radford was inclined to believe that this was true. Accordingly, there was less likelihood of another mass assault by the Vietminh. The relief column, of which there had been so much notice in the press lately, consisted of about 3000 indigenous troops officered by Frenchmen. In their progress north they had now about reached the beginning of the relatively good road which led to Dien Bien Phu, a distance of 29 miles. The column, said Admiral Radford, was not strong enough to affect significantly the outcome at Dien Bien Phu unless it were reinforced by the airdrop of additional troops. Admiral Radford expressed the belief that such reinforcement was feasible.

The French were continuing to drop paratroopers into Dien Bien Phu, though in recent days the number of men dropped into the fortress did not equal the casualties, which amounted to between 120 and 150 a day.

A brief interval of silence followed Admiral Radford's briefing, after which Governor Stassen said that he wished to express his views. It seemed to him that the time was now at hand when the Council should make its ultimate decision as to the U.S. course of action. In his view, if the French folded, and even if the British refused to go along with us, the United States should intervene alone in the southern areas of Indochina in order to save the situation. Governor Stassen said that he realized that this would require Congressional permission, but he was convinced that if we managed to keep a portion of Indochina from Communist domination, and exhibited strength and determination, this course of action would enable us to save the rest of Southeast Asia. Governor Stassen said that, recognizing the appalling weakness of both the British and the French positions, he felt that we should not allow this weakness to render the United States inactive and impotent. Everything, therefore, counselled that the United States at this time determine the ultimate lengths to which it would be willing to go to save Southeast Asia. Even though it might prove unnecessary to go to the ultimate limits, a determination to do so if necessary would greatly strengthen the Secretary of State in conducting the negotiations at Geneva, and might produce a much better settlement at Geneva than we could otherwise anticipate. Of course, if the French remained in the fight and did not fold, there would be many additional possibilities of building real strength for the free world side in Southeast Asia. Failure of the United States to determine at this time to take a strong ultimate position would not only critically endanger its interests in Southeast Asia, but would have the gravest repercussions on the United States position throughout the free world. Difficult as this decision was, Governor Stassen expressed confidence that the Congress and the people of the United States would support direct intervention in Indochina by the United States if the Commander-in-Chief made it clear to them that such a move was necessary to save Southeast Asia from Communism.

The President expressed considerable doubt as to whether Governor Stassen's diagnosis of the attitude of the Congress and the people in this contingency was correct. He furthermore accused Governor Stassen of making assumptions which leaped over situations of the gravest difficulty. It was all well and good to state that if the French collapsed the United States must move in to save Southeast Asia, but if the French indeed collapsed and the United States moved in, we would in the eyes of many Asiatic peoples merely replace French colonialism with American colonialism. The President reminded the Council of the views expressed to him earlier by the Ambassador from Vietnam with respect to the very small number of the indigenous population of Vietnam who had any confidence in French promises of independence. Such skepticism, said the President, indicated to him that the people of the Associated States had failed to comprehend the cause for which the free world was fighting. Finally, continued the President, where could the United States quickly find military forces to replace the forces which the French would withdraw? In short, where and how could the United States intervene in Indochina?

Replying to the points the President had made, Governor Stassen insisted that the obvious fact that the Vietnamese did not trust the French was no reason to argue that they did not trust us. He perceived no insurmountable difficulty in this respect if the United States were to take over from France. He was confident that the Associated States would be glad to invite U.S. intervention, and he furthermore believed that if the French did decide to get out of Indochina, circumstances would compel them to phase their withdrawal in such fashion as to permit the orderly introduction of U.S. forces.

The President admitted the cogency of Governor Stassen's last point, but said that what he feared was a French decision to get out of Indochina made at Geneva and made in such a way as to prevent the United States from taking over the French responsibilities.

Governor Stassen replied that he very much doubted if the French would agree with the Communists at Geneva to get out of Indochina unconditionally and thus close the door to the United States. In any case, Governor Stassen said he certainly did not think that the United States should go into Indochina in any sense as partners of the French with a view to bolstering the French position. We should take command of the situation in such a way as to enlist the loyalty and support of the indigenous forces as the French had failed to do. He reiterated his conviction that an orderly transition from French to U.S. responsibility could be carried out unless the French actually dropped their arms and ran from the field, which he thought was quite unlikely.

The President then expressed his own conviction that if the United States were to intervene in Indochina alone, it would mean a general war with China and perhaps with the USSR, which the United States would have to prosecute separated from its allies.

In response, Governor Stassen expressed the opinion that the Chinese Communists were unlikely to intervene if the United States contented itself merely with occupying and holding the southern areas of Indochina and did not attempt to roll back the Vietminh beyond the border between China and Indochina.

The President remained skeptical in the face of Governor Stassen's argument, and pointed out our belief that a collective policy with our allies was the only posture which was consistent with U.S. national security policy as a whole. To go in unilaterally in Indochina or other areas of the world which were endangered, amounted to an attempt to police the entire world. If we attempted such a course of action, using our armed forces and going into areas whether we were wanted or not, we would soon lose all our significant support in the free world. We should be everywhere accused of imperialistic ambitions.

Governor Stassen took issue with the President's argument and pointed out that the peoples of the Philippines and of South Korea certainly did not consider us to be imperialists. Where we were so considered was precisely in those areas of the world where we were found supporting British and French positions. We plainly had thrust upon us the leadership responsibility for the free world, and, said Governor Stassen, we should determine to meet this responsibility.

The President replied that to him the concept of leadership implied associates. Without allies and associates the leader is just an adventurer like Genghis Khan.

Governor Stassen said that there was no need to despair of associates. We could almost certainly count on Thailand, Australia and New Zealand to go along with us. If, however, we lacked the courage to make the assault, we would presently find that we lacked any followers in the free world. On the other hand, if we do manifest our leadership, there will be plenty of others who will gradually return to our fold.

Dr. Flemming inquired of the President as to the likelihood that the Associated States would invite the armed intervention of the United States. The President replied that he could give no precise answer to Dr. Flemming's question. Up to now the Associated States had not been entirely their own masters and in any case had made no request, direct or indirect, for such intervention. The President again repeated his conviction that if the United States were to permit its ground forces to be drawn into conflict in a great variety of places throughout the world, the end result would be gravely to weaken the defensive position of the United States. Before doing that, it almost appeared that we would have to choose between actually launching an attack on Soviet Russia or gradually permitting ourselves to be exhausted in piecemeal conflicts, as had been the fate of the British.

Governor Stassen suggested that it would be possible to take some of the U.S. forces out of Korea for use in Indochina, but the President pointed out that President Rhee was screaming and yelling because we had already redeployed two divisions. Moreover, it was well to remember that there were a million Chinese soldiers across the border ready to pounce on South Korea if its defenses were weakened. Governor Stassen observed that he thought that the ultimate sanction of an all-out attack on Communist China if they renewed their aggression against South Korea, was sufficient to prevent a Communist Chinese attack on South Korea in the event more of our own forces were withdrawn. The President, however, insisted on his view that if the United States fought unilaterally against the Vietminh in Indochina, the Chinese Communists would move against Korea.

Governor Stassen replied that in any event it would be impossible to let the Communists take over Indochina and then try to save the rest of the free world from a similar fate. This was the time and the place to take our stand and make our decision.

The President answered that before he could bring himself to make such a decision, he would want to ask himself and all his wisest advisers whether the right decision was not rather to launch a world war. If our allies were going to fall away in any case, it might be better for the United States to leap over the smaller obstacles and hit the biggest one with all the power we had. Otherwise we seemed to be merely playing the enemy's game—getting ourselves involved in brushfire wars in Burma, Afghanistan, and God knows where. To this Governor Stassen replied that it was perfectly possible to prevent dissipating our military power in local wars. We could do this by the threat of general war if the Communists crossed any national boundary. The situation in Indochina, however, was different, since the Communists had already got into Indochina before President Eisenhower and the new Administration had come into power in the United States.

The President said that perhaps Governor Stassen's diagnosis was correct, but went on to say that before he would be prepared to commit U.S. divisions to Indochina—six, eight, ten, however many were required—he would earnestly put before the leaders of the Congress and the Administration the great question whether it would not be better to decide on general war and prepare for D-Day. The cause of the free world could never win, the United States could never survive, if we frittered away our resources in local engagements. This process would go on indefinitely, with the Communists trying everywhere to involve the United States in indecisive engagements which would ultimately sap its strength.

Secretary Kyes said with great emphasis that the President was as sound as anyone could be. The people of the United States would rather hit Soviet Russia than put a single man to fight in Indochina.

The President said he was frightened to death at the prospect of American divisions scattered all over the world, and now it was suggested that we put six more in Indochina. It was obvious that we should have to go to general mobilization if we followed this course.

Secretary Smith said he believed that there might be an alternative to doing too much on the one hand or doing nothing on the other. The Congress had rejected the idea of the United States providing combat assistance to Indochina unless we were assured of support by our allies for this course of action. Since the Congress took that position regarding an air strike to save Dien Bien Phu, we have come to recognize that the fall of Dien Bien Phu need not necessarily amount to a military disaster or involve the complete failure of the Navarre Plan for victory in Indochina. The French are now pressing for U.S. assistance in the air even if Dien Bien Phu should fall. They argue that such air strikes by U.S. planes would enable them to continue the fight in Indochina. If they really mean this we might well avoid having to commit any U.S. ground forces in Indochina. After all, there were plenty of ground forces available now if they could be properly trained and used. Would it be possible, therefore, that even without Britain the United States could induce some of the Asiatic states to join with us in intervening in Indochina? If so, we would meet the basic condition set by the Congress (concerted action) and would be able promptly to give the French what they were asking for—air strikes by U.S. planes.

The President interrupted to say that in a general way this was what he had hoped might come to pass, until Australia had collapsed and indicated its refusal to join the regional grouping.[11]

Secretary Smith then continued. If, as a result of a Congressional resolution permitting U.S. armed intervention in concert with willing states, the French were prevailed upon to continue the struggle, they might even permit the United States to send in a considerable military mission which would take over responsibility for the training of the native forces. Thus it might be possible to carry out the objectives of the Navarre Plan. All this, said Secretary Smith, represented a possible course of action which we should investigate without waiting to see what happens at the Geneva Conference. Secretary Smith concluded by expressing agreement with the President that we could never get the U.S. public to allow us to send U.S. divisions to fight with the French alone in Indochina. The public would insist on some allies, on the desire of the Associated States to be saved, and upon avoiding identification with colonialism.

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[11] For documentation on the attitude of Australia on the question of collective defense in Southeast Asia, see volume XII.

The Vice President noted the invariable tendency to thinking of armed intervention only in terms of ground forces. Nevertheless, there were more than enough ground forces potentially available in Indochina. The effect of U.S. air strikes on current battles in Indochina, such as Dien Bien Phu, might not be decisive, but the effect of such air strikes on the climate of opinion throughout the free world might well prove decisive. It would amount to the United States saying to the Communists, "This is as far as you go, and no further." Secondly, continued the Vice President, he thought that we would put ourselves in the worst possible position if we decided to stay precisely where we now are. To do no more than we have done would be tantamount to giving Britain a veto on U.S. action in Southeast Asia. The French have asked us for help. They have asked no one else. But if the French are made to realize that we cannot give them the desired help unless some other nations join with us, they might be brought to agree to the intervention of a coalition of nations including the United States. Certainly Thailand and the Philippines would join such a coalition. So probably would Australia after the national elections are completed. What he kept getting back to, said the Vice President, was his unwillingness to let the British have a veto over our freedom of action. He thought that we should soberly consider what we should do in Southeast Asia. We should then do this with the British if they will come along, but without them if they won't. Our chief assets in this area are the Associated States themselves, and the Vice President said he would even follow this course if Australia failed to join us. The truth of the matter was that, at least in the Far East, our close tie-up with the British was a painful liability.

The President said that he would agree with the Vice President if he could be sure that the Vice President was correct in assuming that the French would stay and fight in Indochina. If they proved willing to do so, the President said that he would agree to put this proposal up to Congress.

Mr. Cutler called attention to the position of the British Chiefs of Staff that the introduction of additional outside ground forces would be essential and that the commitment of air forces alone would not save the situation. Was not this, he asked, also the view of our own Chiefs of Staff? Admiral Radford replied that this was not quite the case, since our objective was to hold in a given situation rather than to achieve a victory at once.

Secretary Smith reminded the Council that it had agreed to underwrite the Navarre Plan chiefly in order to increase the indigenous forces. He still thought the Navarre Plan fundamentally sound if it was carried out right. At the present time the success of the Navarre Plan was threatened not so much by a military disaster as by a psychological collapse. If it were possible to prevent a collapse of the French will, and to keep the training plan for the indigenous forces alive by means of a U.S. training mission and by U.S. air strikes, we might ultimately save the situation in Indochina without being obliged to commit U.S. ground forces. General Navarre, however, would have to go. He had proved incompetent. We should also have to have absolute assurances from France for the complete independence of the Associated States. Certainly we could not, repeated Secretary Smith, go into Indochina with the French alone. At any rate, something like this seemed to him the only possible kind of formula.

The Vice President said that we should get all of our associates in this enterprise to join with us in guaranteeing the complete independence of the Associated States. The President said he was still uncertain whether the Associated States would actually invite U.S. intervention. Governor Stassen, however, expressed confidence that they would do so now that their independence had been declared and established. In his experience, the natives of these States were friendly to U.S. personnel and liked the United States. Secretary Smith pointed out that the Cambodians had wanted to raise the issue of the Communist invasion in the UN, but that we ourselves had counselled against such a move.

Secretary Smith then said that he had two concrete suggestions for action by the National Security Council. He pointed out that he was leaving for Geneva tomorrow afternoon. He suggested that he invite the ANZUS deputies to meet with him this evening. At this time he would discreetly indicate that although the British had turned down our invitation to join in a regional grouping, we were by no means sure that we would abandon the effort because of this refusal and would not go on to make our declaration with such other nations as would join us. Secretary Smith would say no more to the deputies, but let them think this point over.[12]

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[12] No record of the proposed meeting has been found in Department of State files.

The second step, continued Secretary Smith, would be taken when he conferred with Secretary Dulles in Geneva on Saturday and secured the Secretary's reaction to this plan as well as his latest appraisal of the situation at Geneva. Meanwhile, we could give hints to the French that we have not made a final decision as to our intervention in Indochina. This would help to keep the French going, and Secretary Dulles would be back next week, at which time a decision might be made in the National Security Council.

The President agreed with the proposed action, but stated that he wanted to end the meeting with one word of warning. If we wanted to win over the Congress and the people of the United States to an understanding of their stake in Southeast Asia, let us not talk of intervention with U.S. ground forces. People were frightened, and were opposed to this idea.

The National Security Council: [13]

a. Discussed the situation with respect to Indochina in the light of oral reports by the Acting Secretary of State and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, on developments with respect to the Geneva Conference and the Indochina situation.

b. Agreed that, despite the current unwillingness of the British Government to participate at this time and without awaiting developments at the Geneva Conference, the United States should continue its efforts, undertaken pursuant to NSC Action No. 1086–*b*–(1), to organize a regional grouping, including initially the U.S., France, the Associated States, and other nations with interests in the area, for the defense of Southeast Asia against Communist efforts by any means to gain control of the countries in this area; final recommendation on the above to await the return and report of the Secretary of State.

Note: The action in *b* above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State for appropriate action.

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[13] Points *a* and *b* below constituted NSC Action No. 1104, Apr. 29, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

Eisenhower Library, "Project 'Clean Up', Indochina"

Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler) to the Under Secretary of State (Smith)

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, April 30, 1954.

1. The draft of formal record of action of the NSC Meeting, April 29/54,[1] reads:

"Agreed that, despite the current unwillingness of the British Government to participate at this time and without awaiting developments at the Geneva Conference, the United States should continue its efforts, undertaken pursuant to NSC Action No. 1086*b*(1),* to organize a regional grouping, including initially the U.S., France, the Associated States, and other nations with interests in the area, for the defense of Southeast Asia against Communist efforts by any means to gain control of the countries in this area.[2]

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[1] See memorandum of discussion at the 194th Meeting of the Council, Apr. 29, p. 1431.

*NSC Action No. 1086*b*(1), April 6/54, reads:

> "Agreed that the United States should direct its efforts prior to the Geneva Conference toward:
>
> (1) Organizing a regional grouping, including initially the U.S., the U.K., France, the Associated States, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines, for the defense of Southeast Asia against Communist efforts by any means to gain control of the countries in this area."

2. For the benefit of the Planning Board at its later meeting on April 29/54, I orally expanded the above formal language, as follows:

1) Without awaiting the outcome of the Geneva Conference and despite the negative UK attitude, the State Department would continue to explore the possibility of forming a regional grouping in the Far East without the British; immediately taking up the matter with Australia and New Zealand.[3] Such a grouping might include the ROK.

2) Intervention by U.S. with combat forces would still depend on invitation of indigenous nations; a sufficient regional grouping so that it would not appear that the U.S. was acting alone to bail out French colonies and to meet Congressional sentiment, and on Congressional authority. No intervention based on executive action.

3) The State Department should hint to France that U.S. is continuing to explore possible bases upon which to found an approach to Congress for authority to act.

4) The State Department should indicate to the British that, despite UK negative attitude, the U.S. is continuing to explore as indicated in 1) and 3) above.

5) Final action should not be taken until the Secretary of State's return from Geneva.

3. The following points developed in the Planning Board discussion at the April 29/54 Meeting:

a. It appears France and Vietnam have signed only an agreement *later* to execute independence papers. The French Cabinet is unwilling to give independence for a further two months (i.e. *after* Geneva Conference). Accordingly, a basic condition for Congressional authority has not been met. Furthermore, it is impossible to meet the President's requirement that the indigenous peoples invite and actively desire U.S. intervention. (This has been told to President.)

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[2] The following handwritten addition appears at this point on the source text: "final recommendation in the above regard to await the return and report of the Secretary of State."

[3] The following handwritten marginal notation appears at this point on the source text: "Not able to do so before departure but will have full ANZUS meeting in Geneva on arrival."

b. Should decision be made now as to U.S. intention to use "new weapons", on intervention, in Vietnam on military targets? Would one "new weapon" dropped on Vietminh troop concentrations in reserve behind DBP be decisive in casualties and overwhelming in psycho effect on Vietminh opposition? (Query: could one "new weapon" be loaned to France for this purpose? Could French airmen make a proper drop? Would French Government dare take step?)

c. If U.S. decides that it *will* use "new weapons" on intervention

(1) Should it tell its proposed associates in regional grouping at outset? Would the effect upon them be to frighten them off?

(2) Will France and Britain take alarm, with possible repercussions on U.S. air bases overseas? If they should seek to cancel our bases on such a ground, how valuable are our allies and these bases?

d. View was expressed that U.S. use of "new weapon" in Vietnam would tend to deter Chinese aggression in retaliation, and that failure to use the "new weapon" in Vietnam would tend to increase chance of Chinese aggression in retaliation (i.e. the Chinese would feel the U.S. was afraid to use its one massive superiority).

e. View was expressed that neither USSR nor China wants a "new weapon" war now, at a time when U.S. had manifest superiority in "new weapons" and delivery capability. Chou En-lai is talking big to bluff the U.S.

Note: Ro had opportunity to discuss generally the foregoing with the President and Vice President this morning.[4] Their opinion was (1) that the regional grouping should be formed without announcing our intention about the "new weapons"; (2) that the U.S. would unquestionably be asked by its associates what its attitude was toward the use of "new weapons"; (3) that it was very unlikely that a "new weapon" could effectively be used in the jungles around DBP, and that well piloted Corsair strikes with HE bombs and Napalm bombs would be more effective; (4) that we might *consider* saying to the French that we had never yet given them any "new weapons" and if they wanted some *now* for possible use, we might give them a few;[5] (5)

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[4] In his memoirs Richard Nixon provides the following account of the meeting under reference:

"The next morning I met with Eisenhower and General Robert Cutler, his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. Cutler reported that the NSC planning board had been discussing the possibility of telling our allies that if we went into Indochina, we might use the atom bomb. Eisenhower asked me what I thought about this idea; I said that whatever was decided about using the bomb, I did not think it was necessary to mention it to our allies before we got them to agree on united action. I emphasized, as I had at the NSC meeting, that it might not be necessary to have more than a few conventional air strikes by the united forces to let the Communists see that we were determined to resist. Eisenhower turned to Cutler and said, 'First, I certainly do not think that the atom bomb can be used by the United States unilaterally, and second, I agree with Dick that we do not have to mention it to anybody before we get some agreement on united action'." (*Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, p. 154)

[5] The following handwritten marginal notation appears at this point on the source text: "question of law."

that the declarations which we had already made relative to what we would do if China overtly intervened in Indo-China was the important deterrent to Chinese intervention, rather than whether or not we used the "new weapon" in Vietnam; (6) that the important thing was to get a regional grouping together as rapidly as possible.

ROBERT CUTLER

Editorial Note

In his memoirs, President Eisenhower provides the following account of the discussion on Indochina and the Geneva Conference which occurred at the 194th Meeting of the National Security Council, April 29, 1954:

"That afternoon Acting Secretary of State Bedell Smith reported on behind-the-scenes movements in Paris and Geneva. Eden's position was that the British would support any peace agreement the French would make and would be willing to guarantee it; i.e., to put their weight behind its enforcement. They were not willing to enter into any regional defense agreement with non-Communist countries to safeguard Southeast Asia until *after* the Geneva Conference.

"Bedell's report included the statement that Australia and New Zealand had withdrawn from their original position favorable to united action. More encouraging was the news that the French had signed a new, preliminary agreement with the Associated States the day before in Paris, and that nearby Thailand was showing that they recognized the Communist danger to themselves by asking us to increase the level of our military assistance.

"The French kept alive the possibility that we could solve some of our 'constitutional problems' and launch a unilateral air strike—on their terms. They were said to be trying to prevent the fall of Dien Bien Phu for three weeks in this hope.

"The situation at Dien Bien Phu, however, had now become impossible. The French defense area had shrunk to a perimeter fifteen hundred yards in diameter, making it extremely difficult to drop supplies to the garrison. The French force was down to 8500 effective infantrymen and 1200 artillerymen—against a Vietminh force of 40,000. One relief column of 3000 native troops had made a feeble effort to rescue Dien Bien Phu, but obviously could not affect the battle.

"We discussed once more the possibility of United States intervention by an air strike in Indochina. Although the three service chiefs—Army, Navy, Air Force—had recommended against this course, there was some merit in the argument that the psychological effect of an air strike would raise French and Vietnamese morale and improve, at least temporarily, the entire situation.

"During the course of this meeting I remarked that if the United States were, unilaterally, to permit its forces to be drawn into conflict in Indochina and in a succession of Asian wars, the end result would be to drain off our resources and to weaken our over-all defensive position. If we, without allies, should ever find ourselves fighting at various places all over the region, and if Red Chinese aggressive participation were clearly identified, then we could scarcely avoid, I said, considering the necessity of striking directly at the head instead of the tail of the snake, Red China itself.

"But in the meantime, the problem was to solve the current dilemma. Even without a mechanism for united action, we could still go on giving the French considerable material aid. Moreover, Bedell Smith at my direction was to go to Geneva the next afternoon and invite the ANZUS deputies to meet with him that evening. Bedell was not at all sure that merely because the British had turned down our invitation to join a regional grouping we should abandon the whole effort." (*Mandate for Change*, pages 354–355)

In his memoir account, Richard Nixon adds the following:

"At the end of April the situation at Dien Bien Phu took another turn for the worse, and it did not look as if the French forces could hold on much longer. I made a diary note on April 29:

> "The NSC meeting started at ten o'clock and did not end until one. The last hour and three-quarters was spent discussing Indochina.
>
> "Radford reported on the military situation and on his conversations with the French and British. Bedell Smith read a message from Dulles which indicated considerable pessimism but that Dulles was going to stand firm for the American position.
>
> "The President was extremely serious and seemed to be greatly concerned about what was the right course to take.
>
> "After the reports were made, Harold Stassen said that he thought that decision should be to send ground troops if necessary to save Indochina, and to do it on a unilateral basis if that was the only way it could be done.
>
> "The President himself said that he could not visualize a ground troop operation in Indochina that would be supported by the people of the United States and which would not in the long run put our defense too far out of balance. He also raised the point that we simply could not go in unilaterally because that was in violation of our whole principle of collective defense against communism in all places in the world.

"After Stassen's proposal had been discussed, I said that in my judgment winning the war in Vietnam was not necessarily a question of committing a lot of ground troops to combat. Sending an Air Force contingent representing a unified alliance would have the double effect of letting the Communists know that we were going to resist further expansion in the area, and of bolstering the morale of the French and the Vietnamese troops. I suggested that we explore the possibilities of developing a Pacific coalition without the British, an alliance with Thailand, the Philippines, Indochina, Australia, New Zealand, and whatever other nations would join." (*Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, pages 153–154)

For the pertinent portions of the memorandum of discussion at the 194th Meeting of the NSC, see page 1431.

751G.13/4–3054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, April 30, 1954—1 p. m.

2164. Repeated information Paris 731, Hanoi 396. Decree signed by Bao Dai before departure for Paris gives Binh Zuyen full control Vietnamese Surete effective May 1. Lai Huu Sang, military counselor to General Le Van Vien, Binh Zuyen commander in chief, named director Surete, and Sang's brother, Lai Huu Tai, now political counselor to Vien, is reportedly soon to be given directorship Saigon-Cholon police. Thus, all civilian law enforcement agencies in south will be in hands of scarcely disguised gangsters.

Binh Zuyen attempted gain power over security service back in January with advent Buu Loc, who wisely would have none of it. Buu Loc has allegedly continued oppose move, but was overruled by Bao Dai.

Probably reason for this move is large concession in return for Binh Zuyen obedience to April 9 decree amalgamating paramilitary forces into Vietnamese national army. More Machiavellian motive ascribed to Bao Dai by French expert in Ministry of Interior is desire get as much money out of Vietnam through use Binh Zuyen, masters of arts of "squeeze" and extortion, before proposed National Assembly drastically reduces his power and income.

French expert considered transfer Surete to Binh Zuyen "catastrophic", not only because of general lawlessness, kidnappings, gangland rule which would follow, but principally because of threat to Vietnamese unity which move symbolized. Cao Dais and Hoa Haos were now certain also to demand profitable concessions, so that the south would dissolve into greater chaos, and the much discussed unity of Vietnam, which seemed on point realization year ago, would in his view be completely destroyed.

So far as Viet Minh was concerned, French expert believed Binh Zuyen accession to power would not be damaging to Nationalist cause. Binh Zuyen are anti-Communist, not of course by ideology but for profit. Binh Zuyen would also, he thought, be able handle what he expected would be few Viet Minh May Day demonstrations (see Embtel 2163 April 30).[1]

McCLINTOCK

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[1] Telegram 2163 from Saigon, Apr. 30, which concerned the possibility of May Day demonstrations, is not printed. (700.001/4–3054)

INR–NIE files

National Intelligence Estimate

SECRET

WASHINGTON, 30 April 1954.

NIE 63–54

CONSEQUENCES WITHIN INDOCHINA OF THE FALL OF DIEN BIEN PHU[1]

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable consequences within Indochina during the next two or three months of the fall of Dien Bien Phu within the near future.

SCOPE

The consequences of the fall of Dien Bien Phu on the political situation in France, and the repercussions of major decisions in France or Geneva on the situation in Indochina, are excluded from the scope of this estimate.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The fall of Dien Bien Phu would have far-reaching and adverse repercussions, but it would not signal the immediate collapse of the French Union political and military situation in Indochina. As a consequence of the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the morale of French Union forces would receive a severe blow. A crucial factor in the military situation thereafter would be the reliability of native units, particularly the Vietnamese. There would almost certainly be increased desertions, and the possibility cannot be excluded that the native components of French Union forces might disintegrate. However, we believe that such disintegration would be unlikely during the ensuing two or three months, and that for at least this period the major part of the native troops would probably remain loyal.

2. Assuming no such disintegration, the fall of Dien Bien Phu would not in itself substantially alter the relative military capabilities of French Union and Viet Minh forces in Indochina during the next two or three months. The French stand at Dien Bien Phu has produced certain compensatory military results. It has prevented an overrunning of Laos and has resulted in the inflicting of casualties upon the Viet Minh comparable in number to the total French force committed at Dien Bien Phu. The bulk of Viet Minh forces released by the fall of Dien Bien Phu would probably not be able to move, regroup, and

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, "The Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 28 April 1954. The AEC and FBI abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

"The following member organizations of the Intelligence Advisory Committee participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff."

re-equip in time to be employed in new major operations during the next two or three months, although some lightly equipped infantry battalions might be made available more rapidly for operations in the Delta region.

3. Although the Viet Minh have a substantial capability to organize demonstrations and carry out sabotage and terrorist activities in the major cities of Indochina, we believe that French Union forces could maintain control in those cities.

4. The political consequences in Indochina of the fall of Dien Bien Phu would be considerably more adverse than the strictly military consequences and would increase the tempo of deterioration in the over-all French Union position in Indochina, particularly in Vietnam. There would probably be a serious decline in the Vietnamese will to continue the war and to support the Vietnamese military programs. However, we believe that general collapse of French and native governmental authority during the next two or three months would be prevented by the continued existence of organized French Union forces and the hope among Indochinese that the US might intervene in Indochina.

5. We believe that although the fall of Dien Bien Phu would not immediately lead to collapse of the French Union position in Indochina, it would accelerate the deterioration already evident in the French Union military and political position there. If this trend were not checked, it could bring about a collapse of the French Union position during the latter half of 1954. It should be emphasized that this estimate does not consider the repercussion of major decisions in France or Geneva and elsewhere, which could have a decisive effect on the situation in Indochina.

DISCUSSION

6. We believe that the fall of Dien Bien Phu, if it occurred as assumed in the problem, would result from: (*a*) French capitulation; or (*b*) an overwhelming of the French either by assault or by gradual constriction of the French position.

7. If the French were to capitulate wthout further heavy fighting, the adverse military and political consequences would be essentially similar in kind, though possibly of greater intensity, to those accompanying the fall of the fortress through heavy fighting. Viet Minh losses in the event of capitulation would be less than those which would be incurred during further heavy fighting.

8. In any event, the Viet Minh would have suffered heavy losses in the prolonged fighting at Dien Bien Phu. Estimated Viet Minh cas-

ualties in the fighting there to date are approximately 13,000; roughly 50 percent of this number have been killed or rendered permanently ineffective. Although a few experienced units have been sent as reinforcements, individual replacements for the most part have consisted of partially trained personnel. As a result of the Dien Bien Phu operation, the effectiveness of the Viet Minh offensive striking force will be greatly reduced during the next two or three months.

9. French Union casualties at Dien Bien Phu to date have been approximatly 5,500. The defeat of the force now at Dien Bien Phu would add another 11,000, thus bringing the total French Union losses to roughly 17,000. At least two-thirds of these troops are experienced, professional units from Algerian, colonial and foreign legion forces. Moreover, six of the thirteen parachute battalions in the French Union forces in Indochina are at Dien Bien Phu. The loss of these elite French Union troops would reduce the French Union offensive striking force by approximately one-quarter, thus markedly reducing overall French Union capabilities for offensive operations in Indochina.

10. As a consequence of the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the morale of the French Union forces would receive a severe blow. Their will to win would be diminished, largely because of a widespread belief that military victory was no longer possible. The loss of morale would probably not be sufficient to reduce the effectiveness of the professional soldiers of the French Expeditionary force. However, a crucial factor in the military situation thereafter would be the reliability of native units, particularly the Vietnamese. There would almost certainly be an increase in Vietnam desertions, and the possibility cannot be excluded that the native components of French Union forces might disintegrate. However, we believe that such disintegration would be unlikely during the ensuing two or three months, and that for at least this period the major part of the native troops would probably remain loyal. Therefore, we estimate that the impact upon the morale of the French Union forces would be severe, but not of such severity as to preclude their employment as an effective military force during the next two or three months.

11. The fall of Dien Bien Phu would not in itself substantially alter the relative military capabilities of French Union and Viet Minh forces in Indochina during the next two or three months unless there were large-scale desertions from the French Union forces. The victorious Viet Minh troops at Dien Bien Phu would have suffered heavy casualties and their efficiency would be reduced. In order to bring these forces up to full strength, the Viet Minh would probably move them from Dien Bien Phu to their main supply and training areas adjacent to the Red River delta. Prior to the rainy season, this redeployment

would require at least three to four weeks. After the full onset of the rainy season, which is unlikely before mid-May, the movement would take between two and three months to complete. We therefore estimate that the bulk of the Viet Minh troops at Dien Bien Phu would not be available for major operations elsewhere in Indochina during the next two or three months, although some lightly-equipped infantry battalions might be made available more rapidly for operations in the Delta region.

12. Although the over-all capabilities of the Viet Minh would be reduced as a consequence of the losses inflicted upon their main striking force, Viet Minh forces elsewhere in Indochina would have the capability during the rainy season to maintain and in some instances increase military pressure against French Union forces. In the Red River delta, they could intensify efforts to sever land communications between Hanoi and Haiphong, ambush French detachments, attack villages, air bases, and other installations, and lay siege to isolated French delta strong points. The scale of Viet Minh operations in the Delta, however, would be restricted by the adverse effects of heavy rains on maneuverability. The Viet Minh could use their force concentrated in the Pleiku region in southern Annam to launch fairly large-scale attacks against French forces engaged in the "Atlante" operation. They could also use units from this force for raiding operations in the Mekong River area or to reinforce the Viet Minh battalions now in Cambodia. Combat operations in southern Annam, the Mekong valley, and in Cambodia would be restricted by the tenuous nature of resupply of ammunition and other military equipment for these units. The Viet Minh could at the same time organize demonstrations and carry out sabotage and terrorist activities in the major cities of Indochina. The Viet Minh capability in this regard is probably substantial.

13. French Union forces, assuming no major Vietnamese defections, would have the capability to maintain their present major fortified positions in the Delta, and elsewhere, maintain control in the major cities, prevent the permanent severing of land communications between Hanoi and Haiphong, repulse Viet Minh attacks in southern Annam and the Mekong River area, and retain the area liberated in the "Atlante" operation. If the Viet Minh were to undertake a major military operation against Cambodia, the defense of Cambodia would require troops from other areas. French Union forces would retain the capability to launch limited offensive operations before the full onset of the rainy season, either in the Red River delta region or on the coast of Annam.

14. The political consequences in Indochina of the fall of Dien Bien Phu would be considerably more adverse than the strictly military consequences, although the two are interrelated. The defeat would increase the tempo of deterioration in the over-all French Union position in Indochina, particularly in Vietnam. The principal political consequences would be: (*a*) a major blow to French prestige among the Indochinese, and an increased conviction on their part that the French were unable to protect them against the Viet Minh; (*b*) a serious decline in French and Indochinese will to continue the war, and in particular a further decline in popular support in Vietnam for Vietnamese military programs; (*c*) exacerbation of French-Indochinese relations, partly as a result of increased Indochinese suspicions that the French will "sell out" to the Viet Minh; (*d*) a sharp increase of "fence sitting" among politically conscious groups previously disposed to support the Vietnam Government; and (*e*) a sharp increase, particularly among Vietnamese, of covert support of the Viet Minh. However, we believe that a general collapse of French and native governmental authority during the next two or three months would be prevented by the continued existence of organized French Union forces and the hope that the US might intervene in Indochina.

15. The political effect in Laos would probably be similar to that of Vietnam. However, the Laotians would probably display a greater disposition than the Vietnamese to stand by the French and to continue the war effort.

16. The political effect on Cambodia would be extremely uncertain. The internal security of Cambodia and a certain minimum stability might be maintained, but Cambodia's vulnerability to future Viet Minh pressure would increase.

17. The Viet Minh would make every effort to make political capital of their victory at Dien Bien Phu. They would concentrate on increasing the sense of hopelessness in the Associated States, and would seek to convince the Indochinese that the triumph at Dien Bien Phu signalled their imminent "deliverance" from colonial rule by fellow countrymen. They would intensify current efforts to enhance the status of the so-called "People's Governments" of Laos and Cambodia.

18. We believe that although the fall of Dien Bien Phu would not immediately lead to collapse of the French Union position in Indochina, it would accelerate the deterioration already evident in the French Union military and political position there. If this trend were not checked, it could bring about a collapse of the French Union position during the latter half of 1954. It should be emphasized that this estimate does not consider the repercussion of major decisions in

France or Geneva and elsewhere which are likely to have a decisive effect on the situation in Indochina.

[Annex]

TROOP STRENGTHS AND DISPOSITIONS

French Union		*Viet Minh*	
Regular and Light Bns 274	402,000	Regular and Regional Bns 155	185,000
Semi-Military	203,500	Semi-Military	106,000
Total	605,500	Total	291,000

MAJOR CONCENTRATIONS*

Delta	
65 Regular Bns (35 Fr. Ex. Force)	22 Regular Bns
19 Light Bns	10 Regional Bns
83,000 Semi-Military	35,000 Semi-Military
Dien Bien Phu	
16 Regular Bns (15 Fr. Ex. Force)	28 Regular Bns
	2 Regional Bns
Northern Tonkin (Less DB Phu Area)	
	13 Regional Bns
Northern Laos	
14 Regular Bns (10 Fr. Ex. Force)	3 Regular Bns
2 Light Bns	2 Regional Bns
Thakhek–Savannakhet	
17 Regular Bns (13 Fr. Ex. Force)	8 Regular Bns
3 Light Bns	4 Regional Bns
Central Vietnam	
35 Regular Bns (10 Fr. Ex. Force)	14 Regular Bns
16 Light Bns	7 Regional Bns
Cochin China	
17 Regular Bns (3 Fr. Ex. Force)	10 Regular Bns
20 Light Bns	2 Regional Bns
Southern Laos and Northeastern Cambodia	
8 Regular Bns (3 Fr. Ex. Force)	4 Regular Bns
Western Cambodia	
11 Regular Bns (0 Fr. Ex. Force)	Elements
3 Light Bns	

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*These dispositions cover only infantry units. The regional breakdown does not include the total number of Viet Minh and French bns. [Footnote in the source text.]

751G.00/5-254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, May 2, 1954—1 p. m.

2176. Repeated information Paris niact 738, Geneva niact 29, Tokyo 85, Manila 222, Singapore 69. DeJean sent for me this morning to inform me that Viet Minh resumed general attack against central redoubt Dien Bien Phu last night and also attacked "Isabelle" for first time. After fierce fighting, Viet Minh took position 5 in "Huguette", position 3 in "Bas Eliane" (former "Dominique") and position 1 in "Haut Eliane". Most important loss was position 5 in "Huguette" since already tiny drop zone is now further circumscribed. Position 1 in "Haut Eliane" gives Viet Minh additional control high ground commanding central fortifications. Attack on "Isabelle" means withdrawal that position's artillery fire which had thus far supported central garrison.

Situation is grave. I talked briefly with Navarre at airport this morning prior his take-off for Hanoi. He told me he intended to mount some sort of relief operation or possible withdrawal Dien Bien Phu garrison.[1] Fact he is stopping Vientiane en route to talk with De Crevecoeur indicates four battalions stationed Muong Sai will be involved in relief operation but exact nature of move is not known. DeJean will go to Hanoi tomorrow.

McCLINTOCK

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[1] In telegram 2184 from Saigon, May 3, McClintock noted that it was actually not General Navarre, but Navarre's Chief of Staff, General Gambiez, who had said that possibilities for a relief operation or the withdrawal of the garrison of Dien Bien Phu were under examination. (751G.00/5-354)

751G.00/5-354 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, May 3, 1954—noon.

2181. Sent Paris 714, Geneva 32, Hanoi 401. I went up to Dalat yesterday with DeJean. We were accompanied by Offroy, who has just arrived from Geneva en route to Bangkok where he will present his letters as new French Ambassador and return to Geneva May 18. Purpose of trip was to go over political possibilities in view of abruptly worsening situation at Dien Bien Phu. DeJean is flying to Hanoi this afternoon and there will be a council of war there with Generals Navarre, Bodet, Cogny, Lauzin, Gambiez, and Colonel Crevecoeur, Commanding French Union Forces Laos, with Admiral

Auboyneau also present. Purpose council of war will be to examine present critical military posture and decide whether Navarre has capability of doing anything to relieve Dien Bien Phu and, secondly, what military measures can be taken to preserve delta from attack after fall of Dien Bien Phu.

DeJean's main worry is that French Government is "hypnotized on Dien Bien Phu" but he very much fears that certain ministers of his government will advise policy of asking for immediate cease-fire in Indochina in order "to save Dien Bien Phu". DeJean, of course, recognizes that this would be complete disaster and agreed with me that Communists would most certainly portray such action, not only throughout Asia, but elsewhere in world, as French capitulation, irrespective of whether or not remnant of Dien Bien Phu garrison is thus spared. However, DeJean evidently fears that Navarre, after examining the auspices, may telegraph Paris that militarily Dien Bien Phu cannot be saved and that, therefore, only other course is political one. I am sure, however, that DeJean is much heartened at his government's stand against partition (cf. Embassy telegram 2180 repeated Paris 740, Geneva 31 today)[1] and that he will use his utmost influence on the military commanders to continue the fight even if this means taking risks elsewhere in Indochina which Navarre is reluctant to contemplate.

If we desire to prevent French Government from proposing immediate cease-fire, urgent representations at highest level will be necessary in Paris. DeJean promises to inform me results Hanoi conference immediately upon his return tomorrow.

McClintock

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[1] The telegram under reference read as follows: "Dejean has just informed me that he has received telegram from Bidault in Geneva authorizing him to give fullest publicity to refusal of French Government to contemplate any partition of Vietnam." (751G.00/5-354)

751G.00/5-354: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 3, 1954—4 p. m.

2186. Sent Geneva 37, Paris 746; repeated information London 46. Offroy, who has just come back from Geneva, last night told DeJean and me that British policy whether unintentionally or by design seemed almost certain to sabotage Geneva Conference. He said that when French had appealed for US aerial and naval intervention, which was turned down by the President, it was because among other things it had been agreed that there would be no US military intervention unless British made at least some token contribution along same lines. Offroy says that when French Ambassador called on Churchill after Secretary's last visit to London Churchill said: "I cry for those at Dien Bien Phu but I will not risk world peace by intervening".

Offroy likewise states that British in Geneva are actively pushing concept of partition of Vietnam and he and DeJean agreed that there must be some conscious British policy in this regard. They infer that British contemplated a Communist Chinese zone of influence in Tonkin which would be partitioned off to a Viet Minh Government, a sort of buffer state in Central Annam, and a French-US protected independent Cochin-China. Cambodia would be annexed by Thailand which in turn would be in a British zone of influence based on Malaya.

Whether these suspicions have any basis in fact is beyond my province to judge but they certainly influence thinking of top French officials here.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/5-354 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 3, 1954—5 p. m.

2185. Repeated information Paris 745, Geneva 36, Tokyo 88, Manila 226, Singapore 72, Hanoi 402. There was a lull in fighting at Dien Bien Phu yesterday. However, weather was exceedingly bad and no offensive sorties were flown although French Air Force did manage to drop 120 tons of which 60% went either to the enemy or was destroyed on friendly wire.

French admit losses of two battalions in fierce hand-to-hand fighting night of Saturday-Sunday. They say that enemy in taking the three strong points cited Embtel 2176[1] mounted an offensive in strength of from 10 to 12 battalions. Although garrison at Dien Bien Phu still carries 11 battalions on books, these are down to strength of between 200 and 300 men each with only 6 or 7 officers per battalion. French last night managed to drop one company of a colonial parachute battalion and hope to bring other two companies in tonight. It is possible that Navarre will have one additional parachute battalion in reserve to use at Dien Bien Phu but no other reinforcements are in sight.

McCLINTOCK

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[1] Dated May 2, p. 1457.

751G.00/5–354 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 3, 1954—6 p. m.

2188. Repeated information Paris 747, Geneva 38. Geneva's 10, repeated Department Secto 32, Paris 139 [1] makes very wan reading in light of recent decree by Bao Dai as reported Embtel 2164 repeated Paris 731, Hanoi 396 April 30, which hands security forces of South Vietnam to gangster Binh Zuyen. This measure, which is indirect personal responsibility of chief of state, is comparable to city of Chicago placing its police force in hands of Al Capone during latter's heyday.

As indicated Embtel 2164, this measure has had shattering effect on nascent movements toward national unity. It is one more evidence of Bao Dai's consistent policy to divide and rule. However, it comes at time when unity not division is what we need. Under these circumstances I continue question whether it is sound policy to center our hopes on Bao Dai. In fact we stand in perilous analogy to situation we found ourselves in with China, supporting corrupt Kuomintang against disciplined and fanatic Communists.

Ambassador Heath, it will be recalled, has officially congratulated both Bao Dai and Prime Minister Buu Loc on new Vietnamese Government's insistence that graft and corruption must be stamped out of national life. Therefore, I recommend that Ambassador Heath call on Bao Dai and remind him of his government's public stand on this point. I feel likewise that time has come for US Government to indicate very plainly to this chief of state that he cannot expect American support for his regime if he cooperates on immoral basis outlined in Embtel 2164.

In addition to recall to Bao Dai of his obligations as monarch, we should ask him to take immediate remedial measures. These could include either rescission of decree handing security forces to Binh Zuyen or at very minimum refusal of Bao Dai to carry out his proposed intention to place police force of Saigon–Cholon in hands of Sang's brother, Lai Huu Tai. Bao Dai ought also in our opinion to send his Prime Minister back to Vietnam to give more immediate control to government now riven as never before by internal dissension and personal animosity (wide open hatred expressed by Quat for Hinh and Hinh for Quat).

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[1] In telegram Secto 32 from Geneva, Apr. 29, the U.S. Delegation discussed measures which would have to be taken by the French and Vietnamese to counteract the effects of the fall of Dien Bien Phu. For text of Secto 32, see vol. XVI, p. 607.

If some such measures as these can be taken forthwith, aspirations set forth Geneva 10 to Saigon might have some chance of implementation.

Department pass Embtel 2164 to Geneva.

McCLINTOCK

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina"

Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 3, 1954.
PERSONAL AND PRIVATE

RC's Summary of Principal Points Made by the President in Talking With Republican Leaders[2]

1. Attached is outline of points given by R. C. to the President before the meeting.[3]

2. The President referred to the weeks, and even months, of consideration which the Executive Department had been giving to all aspects of the Indochina situation. Despite the rash of advice by

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[1] The source text was transmitted by Cutler to Acting Secretary of State Murphy on May 3. A handwritten notation on the source text indicates that it was seen by Secretary Dulles, Murphy, and MacArthur.

[2] According to the Presidential appointment book, the following individuals were present at the meeting of May 3: Vice President Nixon; Senators Knowland, Ferguson, and Millikin; Representatives Martin, Arends, and Allen; James Bassett of the Republican National Committee; and members of the White House staff. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments")

Another account of this briefing, prepared by Arthur Minnich, Assistant Staff Secretary to the President, read as follows:

"At the May 3rd conference, the President expressed his amazement at newspaper handling of the question in terms of the United States being taken by surprise. Such was certainly not the case. Also, it was untrue to say that the British had stopped the United States from going into Indo China, for we had never considered going in alone. He noted our current effort to stiffen the French will to continue the fight after the fall of Dienbienphu, especially as the French could regard the fight there as a moral victory because of the vast number of enemy casualties.

"Turning then to some specific happenings, the President noted how the French had asked our help in developing three airfields in Laos. Just when we were prepared to haul in materials and supervise construction, we were confronted with a statement from the battlefront that the airfields were not wanted. Perhaps the whole matter had been an effort by the French to get the United States involved in giving some sort of support independently of the other free nations.

"The President concluded that we would have to have some hard talk with our allies after the Geneva Conference. Except for President Magsaysay of the Philippines, the other nations appeared to want to delay any action until after Geneva, in some instances perhaps because of impending elections as in England and Australia. He reported Sec. Dulles' phrasing that we wanted a concert of power not for the purpose of intervening but for the purpose of obviating any *need* for intervention." (Eisenhower Library, White House Office, "Legislative Leadership Conference")

[3] The one-page outline is not printed.

columnists, he had seen nothing new that had not already been canvassed.

3. There was no truth in the story that the United Kingdom stopped the United States from "going in alone". As he had often told the leaders, the U.S. would never intervene with combat troops solely as a partner of France.

4. With respect to Dienbienphu, the original position of the French had been that even if it were lost, the enemy casualties would be so great that the French Union forces would really have won a victory. Now, however, France has changed its story, and claims the loss of Dienbienphu may be decisive to the Indochina war. The President expressed the view that the French had been overplaying the loss of Dienbienphu, and that its loss should not be militarily decisive.

5. Last week the French from Paris requested American help in improving three Laotian airfields. A few days later, General Navarre and the Chief of the French Air Force in Indochina questioned the military desirability of this request. The President remarked that it looked as if the French from Paris were trying to get us to do something for its political effect. While he did not indicate whether or not we would agree to help with these airfields, he re-emphasized the American desire to observe the principle of collective security.

6. The U.S. had to go along with the idea of the Geneva Conference, because so many of our allies wanted it. When the Conference is over, we will have to have some plain talking with our allies.

7. It was gratifying to note that New Zealand, Thailand, and Magsaysay had evidenced great readiness to go ahead. Perhaps because of the Australian election, this meant Menzies would take a more hesitant position than Casey had at first indicated. He thought the Australian and New Zealand people were on our side.

8. Perhaps there is going to be an internal political struggle in Britain, which will lead to a general election. Churchill is probably going to retire. It does not look now as if Britain will participate in general discussions until after the Geneva Conference. (*Note:* The President did *not* refer to the Eden memorandum of May 1,[4] indicating Britain's desire for "secret joint talks").

9. Secretary Dulles' original desire for a regional grouping was not to enable intervention, but so that it might not be necessary to intervene. We are continuing to pursue the idea of a regional grouping.

10. The President agreed, and several times mentioned the desirability of having Dulles thoroughly brief the Congressional Leaders on his return (it was not made clear whether Bi-partisan or Republican

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[4] In a memorandum presented to Secretary Dulles at Geneva on Apr. 30, Foreign Secretary Eden suggested secret bilateral talks on the problem of collective defense in Southeast Asia. See the memorandum of conversation with Eden, Apr. 30, vol. XVI, p. 622. See also volume XII.

briefing was intended). Immediately on Dulles' return, the President will have a good talk with him, and try to raise his spirits, which must be somewhat depressed by his experiences at Geneva.

11. The Vice President pointed out that Nehru at the Colombo Conference had been able to carry along with his neutralist point of view only Indonesia. Pakistan (our friend) had taken the lead in influencing Ceylon and Burma toward a point of view not hostile to the collective grouping. It was significant that the Asian countries were not following Nehru's leadership at this crucial time.

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina"

The Director of the Foreign Operations Administration (Stassen) to the Secretary of State[1]

TOP SECRET PERSONAL WASHINGTON, May 3, 1954.

DEAR FOSTER: When you reach Washington I will be in Paris for the OEEC ministers session. Randy Burgess and Sam Waugh are with me and we have reached agreement on the U.S. position on the anticipated issues. It is an important session with a number of difficulties, but I believe we can get a reasonably satisfactory result.

As you may have heard, I raised the question of further Indo-China policy decisions in the NSC on Thursday.[2] May I express my views to you for your consideration. I know that many, if not all, of the views I express are held by you, and I set them out in a complete summary so that you may have definite knowledge of my judgment.

The cables from you and from Admiral Radford, reflecting the U.K. refusal to go along, or to suggest alternatives, and the reports made to the NSC session on 29 April, caused me to conclude that we were then in a position of weakness, without an effective stand, and without sufficient strength of position to carry through Geneva or to prevent the complete fall of Indo-China to the Communists. It seemed imperative to me that you should at once receive, while you were still in Geneva, some indication of future consideration by the NSC and the President of a strong stand, notwithstanding the U.K. attitude.

The complete fall of Indo-China would make it extremely difficult to prevent the fall of Southeast Asia. The fall of Southeast Asia would have a catastrophic effect on Japan, on India, and on Europe, and, of course, on the U.S.

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[1] Gen. R. W. Porter, FOA representative on the NSC Planning Board, signed this letter for Governor Stassen. A typewritten note at the bottom of the source text states that it was transcribed without changes from a handwritten text of May 2.

[2] For extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 194th Meeting of the NSC, Apr. 29, see p. 1431.

Thus I feel that we should now take the ultimate policy decision that we will not permit the complete fall of Indo-China. This, of course, means a decision that we will, if necessary, use U.S. combat forces to prevent the complete fall, and the authorization should be obtained from Congress for the Commander-in-Chief to use U.S. combat forces, if essential, and to the minimum extent necessary, and with maximum assistance obtainable from other free nations, to prevent the complete fall of Indo-China to Communist domination, because of the disastrous consequences which would follow such an event.

If we make this ultimate decision promptly, and receive from Congress at an early date this last ditch authority, then we have a policy of strength at the end of the string. We can proceed more effectively to attain a more desirable result through either the accord of our friends, or the concessions and compromise of the Communists, or both.

If we make this ultimate decision, I believe there is a fair chance that some solution better than the ultimate can be obtained, either by an accumulation of joint action of others, such as Thailand and Australia, or by partial yielding by the Communists.

If we make this ultimate decision we can negotiate more firmly with the French over their relations with the Associated States, their training of Viet Nam, and other matters. We can also follow through firmly with the French on EDC.

If we do then need to go in, it should be under clear conditions of sovereignty for the Associated States and on their invitation. It should be with a U.S. combined command so that vital control over strategy, tactics, and training will be unquestioned, so that the indigenous population will trust the result, for they do not fear U.S. imperialism, but they do fear French imperialism backed by the U.S. It should be with U.S. Marines as the sole critical U.S. ground force as these forces are now in the Far East, are experienced in jungle fighting, and public opinion will accept Marine action better than Army division action.

If we go in we should make it clear at all times that we are doing so to prevent the complete fall of Indo-China to the Communists, that we do not intend to drive to the China border, and that we will continue to be willing to have a settlement satisfactory to the Associated States negotiated. If we attempt with U.S. troops to completely defeat the Communists it will make Chinese Communist intervention and a Chinese war and a world war an odds on probability. It would also take heavy casualties, whereas the southern half can be held, a stalemated or divided Indo-China can be established, Southeast Asia can be saved, without heavy casualties and with a minimum danger of a Chinese war or a world war.

The Indo-Chinese war was going on when the new Eisenhower–Dulles policies were established. It requires special action to resolve.

The world knows of our analysis of its vital nature to U.S. interests; the U.S. cannot then be impotent or the result will be very, very bad.

On the other hand, in the absence of a settlement, the Communists are unlikely to accept a complete U.S. victory in Indo-China without going to war. A complete Viet Nam victory attained over a period of years with well trained native troops and native generals may be a possibility without a Chinese war.

The present Korean situation is not a desirable one, but it is better than a Chinese war, and it is better than a Korean loss. It was attained through U.S. strength of position under your brilliant diplomacy last year. Indo-China is in many respects parallel, and in other respects similar to the Greek situation in 1947. U.S. action in Indo-China, which combines the lessons of these two experiences, appears to me to be the most desirable alternative of a series of unattractive alternatives with which we are faced.

May I elaborate a bit on certain of the points I have stated. The United States does have the strength, even though only the non-Communist people of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia join with us, to prevent the complete fall of Indo-China. The French, as a minimum, would phase out in an orderly manner as the British did in Greece. As a maximum they would continue their present effort under a combined U.S. command and with sovereignty granted to the Associated States, in order that they would participate in a favorable final conclusion, instead of withdrawing in demoralized defeat. Thailand would almost certainly join us, at least in the use of her airfields by U.S. forces and in receiving U.S. Army divisions for reserves. Australia may join after her national election. After that I believe the U.K. may reverse her stand and join us. But whatever the sequence, the first step for strength is a firm U.S. decision not to let Indo-China fall.

If Communist China comes into the war in response to this defensive Southeast Asia approach on our part, if she insists that Communism take over Indo-China, it means that she will insist on Communist control of Southeast Asia as a price of peace. Such a price would be the down payment on war with China rather than a payment for peace. Thus, if Communist China insists on this and is willing to go to war for it, we must meet it now, grave and conclusive though it be.

This is one of the moments of history when the U.S. as leaders must decide, as leaders must act, and proceed to mobilize the maximum of followers, but not permit the followers to make the primary decisions.

If the U.S. does decide and does act, even though I accept the full risks involved, I am convinced that a reasonably satisfactory conclusion can be attained. The new strength of Germany and Japan will then increasingly follow the U.S. in its policy of strength, and the vacillating elements of the free world will also follow, perhaps with reluctance and with irritation, but follow nevertheless. Weakness of U.S. leadership will open divisive chasms in the non-Communist world which cannot be bridged, even though the weakness in U.S. position is in itself a concession to other non-Communist nations.

I am certain that a direct request of the President, personally delivered to the Congress, with full explanation, will result in such authority being granted by more than a two-third's vote.[3] The authority should be obtained promptly, prior to any certainty that it will be used. The free world would at once be essentially strengthened and inspired in its resistance in every respect to aggressive Communism.

I have written of my views, as I spoke at the NSC session, solely for the purpose of contributing toward your consideration and analysis. I will, of course, accept and thoroughly support your conclusions and those of President Eisenhower.

Only General R. W. Porter, my member of the Planning Board of the NSC, knows of this letter. Your use of it is entirely at your discretion.

Sincerely,

HAROLD E. STASSEN

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[3] By letter of May 11, Stassen sent the following documents to Secretary Dulles: 1) "First Preliminary Draft of Senate Resolution to Follow Up Presidential Message Personally Delivered to the Joint Session of Congress;" 2) "First Preliminary Draft—Outline for Suggested Address of the President to a Joint Session of the Congress." A notation on the signed original of Stassen's letter by Roderic O'Connor, Special Assistant to the Secretary, indicates that no reply was transmitted. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina")

Editorial Note

For a summary of the comments made by Major General Thomas J. H. Trapnell, Jr., former Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Indochina, at his debriefing, May 3, 1954, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pages 406–420.

Eisenhower Library, White House Office, "Project 'Clean Up'"

Memorandum of a Conference at the White House, Wednesday, May 5, 1954, 8 a. m.[1]

TOP SECRET

1. The President spoke of the consistent policy of the U.S. since World War II in furthering collective arrangements for the security

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[1] The source text indicates that the President, the Secretary of State, MacArthur, and Cutler attended this meeting. This memorandum was prepared by Cutler. It bears a number of handwritten changes which have been incorporated into the text.

of freedom-loving nations. The proposal of a Southeast Asian regional grouping was accordingly not only nothing new, but fully consistent with U.S. policy.

2. Dulles said that before he made his March 29 speech, he had furnished advance copies of the portions dealing with the regional grouping to the British and French, and they had made no adverse comment. Later, when he made his trip to England and France, there had been agreement, as the communiqué[s] showed, to examine a regional grouping which would be applicable in an attempt to preserve the areas of Indochina, as well as the rest of Southeast Asia, from further communist aggression.

3. Later developments affected the position of England, as originally affirmed by Eden, Churchill, and the British Cabinet. After Dulles returned from his short trip to England and France, the British began to change their position. The British instructed Makins not to attend the first meeting of the nations to participate in the regional grouping. Dulles thinks the British were motivated by a sudden recollection that the Colombo Conference was beginning at this time, and by the views of Admiral Radford, which they interpreted as belligerent.

4. Dulles found the British, and particularly Churchill, scared to death by the specter of nuclear bombs in the hands of the Russians, and also beguiled by the soft talk of the Russians to the effect that East-West trade could be greatly developed. Churchill had referred to the desire of the UK not to be under obligation to the US for further assistance. There was also a desire to get Nehru to preserve neutrality toward the regional grouping, in advance of proceeding. Dulles thought Burma might come in, if India would remain neutral on this subject.

5. Dulles spoke of how galling it was to the US to be the center of the Red attack at Geneva, without any of our Western friends speaking up in general debate in our defense in order to set the historical record right. The Communists accused us of seizing Formosa, and of starting the Korean war. Eden refused to participate in the debate on our side. As a result, Dulles told Eden how disappointed we are in British repudiating the position they had taken in the communiqué. He asked Eden to remember that the US held back, when charged with imperialism and colonialism, in order to protect the UK and France. However, in return, neither the British nor the French were willing to cooperate and speak up on our behalf when we were unjustly attacked at Geneva. Such conduct on Britain's part would make it very difficult vis-à-vis the Congress. He suggested to Eden that perhaps the US might be playing the wrong game, if the UK was unwilling to give us moral and positive backing. To cap this very frank

talk, Eden had the gall to come to the airport to bid Dulles farewell, and be photographed with him, although he never said a word in defense of the US at the Conference.

6. Dulles believes the UK's position is as follows:

a. Prepared to work out jointly with the US a grouping which would have the purpose of preserving Southeast Asia, except that the only part of Vietnam to be covered would be what might be salvaged at the Geneva Conference, and probably Laos and Cambodia (which the British figure the Communists do not mean to take over at this time).

b. Thinking of a division of Vietnam, roughly at the 16th parallel. Dulles doubts whether the Russians would be willing for such a division, and the Vietnamese are strongly opposed.

7. Dulles thought the proposal of the Reds would be along these lines:

a. Evacuate foreign troops.

b. Mixed commission to set up elections.

c. That the Government resulting from these elections would take over. In such an event, all of Vietnam would be lost, except perhaps some enclave.

8. The great difficulty the US faces at this time, so far as Britain is concerned, is that we cannot openly say that the British went back on the arrangement which Dulles had made with them, and that their security plan for Southeast Asia would include, as far as Indochina was concerned, only what was left of Indochina after the Geneva Conference. To publicize this fact would of course be fatal.

9. The President suggested that Dulles give a chronology of the US actions to Congress in his bipartisan briefing,[2] to show that throughout we had adhered to the principle of collective security—Korea, NATO, bringing Turkey and Greece into NATO, Pakistan–Turkey, Inter-American pact, Pacific pacts. He stated no unilateral intervention by the US, overtly, would be tolerable, because it would place a colonial stigma on the US, and because it would exhaust the US eventually. The President did not want Dulles to undercut or repudiate the UK publicly, but merely show the factual record.

10. In view of what Dulles said, the President was puzzled as to whether WC should be allowed to come or not. Maybe we have got so far apart that it would be necessary to have one final talk with him. As to the French position, matters have so deteriorated that there is no longer any government in France capable of effective dealing. Bidault has some discretion, because the Cabinet is too divided to give him instructions. The Deputies meet today, and the Government may be defeated at any time, because it has no solid majority. On the

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[2] For the record of the briefing held on the afternoon of May 5, see p. 1471.

other hand, there is no one on the horizon who seems capable of taking Laniel's place.

11. Dulles made plain the French had resisted all efforts by the US to internationalize the war, and still do so. The French refused to let the case go to the UN from Cambodia or Thailand, and also refused to give Vietnamese independence at this time, on the ground that a detailed economic treaty must first be worked out. He had repeatedly told the French that the success of the struggle in Indochina depended on certain basic things, such as the freedom and support of the native people. But the French only came to the US for help to France in a time of crisis; they never came to the US, as the British did, when forced to withdraw from Greece, to try to work out a peaceful solution for the free world of a difficult situation. Actually, Laniel was publicly denying that France had ever tried to internationalize the war.

12. There is no French policy at the present time. Bidault individually would like to internationalize the war, but he has no sufficient support. The French never formally asked the US for air strikes at Dienbienphu. There were one or two oral and informal requests. What the French fear is if the US is brought into the struggle, France will not have a free hand to "sell out and get out".

13. Dulles states that conditions did not justify the US entry into Indochina as a belligerent at this time. The President firmly agreed. The President commented that our allies are willing to let us pull their chestnuts out of the fire, but will let us be called imperialists and colonialists.

14. We then went over the draft of the statement the President was to make at his press conference,[3] prepared by Dulles. After breakfast, we adjourned to the President's office, and made a considerable number of modifications in it.

15. The President wanted to get in the statement his convictions that the policy of the US in Southeast Asia was consistent with its actions elsewhere in the world, and with UN principles: to establish the peaceful security of areas by collective action with the indigenous peoples. He said again the US had *never* considered unilateral intervention solely to help France.

16. Dulles again spoke of how hard it was to sit by, while the British and to some extent the French were now telling other people falsehoods about our position. If the truth were known, Congress would be angry with the British and French.

17. In response to a question by me, Dulles said the US should now proceed to organize the regional grouping as rapidly as we can, and

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[3] Regarding the press conference, see the editorial note, *infra*.

to include as many nations as possible. He commented on the fact that the UK wanted to go ahead jointly with the US in planning on political and military matters *secretly*. He thought this was not an adequate basis for proceeding. The President intervened to say possibly it should be as follows:

a. We should find out secretly the areas in which the British and Americans can agree.
b. We should then proceed to carry out talks with a wider grouping against that background. Dulles agreed with this procedure.

18. Great disappointment was expressed in Eden's current behavior. The only explanation would seem to be that he was treading water, and playing a cagey game, so as not to upset his succeeding Churchill. Dulles said he certainly hoped Butler would be made the successor.

19. After the conference broke up in the President's office, I mentioned that the Planning Board, with the approval of Smith and the President, had not taken any action with relation to the regional grouping, lest matters be further confused through some leak of its activities. Dulles agreed that the time was now appropriate for the Planning Board to begin giving consideration to all aspects of regional grouping, on a highly restricted basis, of course.[4]

20. Dulles also mentioned that the President wanted brought up at the Council Meeting tomorrow the question of a moratorium in the H bomb tests.[5]

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[4] For documentation on planning for the Southeast Asian regional grouping, see volume XII.

[5] For documentation on this subject, see volume II.

Editorial Note

At his news conference of May 5, 1954 (10:30 a. m.), President Eisenhower read a statement regarding Indochina and the Geneva Conference. He said that the Indochina phase of the conference was in the process of being organized and the issues had not yet been clarified. A large measure of initiative rested with France and the Associated States, the countries most directly concerned. Meanwhile, plans were proceeding for the realization of a Southeast Asia security arrangement. It had never been expected, the President continued, that this system could be created overnight, but the fact that such an organization was in the process of formation could have an important effect upon events at Geneva.

For the record of the President's news conference, including the text of his statement, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pages 450–459.

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina"

Record of the Secretary of State's Briefing for Members of Congress, Held at the Department of State, May 5, 1954, 5:30 p. m.[1]

TOP SECRET PERSONAL AND PRIVATE

The Secretary
G—Mr. Murphy
H—Mr. Morton
EUR—Mr. Merchant
C—Mr. MacArthur

Senators

Knowland—R. California
Ferguson—R. Michigan
Millikin—R. Colorado
Saltonstall—R. Mass.[2]
Johnson—D. Texas
Clements—D. Kentucky
Wiley—R. Wis.[3]
Smith—R. New Jersey
George—D. Georgia
Bridges—R. N.H.
Russell—D. Georgia
Green—D. Rhode Island[4]
Mr. Francis Wilcox, Chief of Staff of Foreign Relations Committee

Representatives

Speaker Martin—R. Mass.
Halleck—R. Ind.
Rayburn—D. Texas[5]
McCormack—D. Mass.
Chiperfield—R. Ill.[6]
Vorys—R. Ohio
Judd—R. Minn.
Gordon—D. Ill.[7]
Lanham—D. Georgia[8]
Vinson—D. Georgia[9]
Short—R. Missouri[10]
Arends—R. Ill.
Mr. Boyd Crawford, Staff Admin. and Com. Clerk of Foreign Affairs Committee

The meeting lasted an hour and a half with a good part of the time taken up by the Secretary's exposition of events at the Geneva Conference and before and after it. However, there were numerous questions from the Congressmen present and the Secretary was frequently interrupted in his presentation.

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[1] The identity of the drafting officer has not been determined. For an additional summary of this meeting, see telegram Tedul 37 to Geneva, May 6, vol. xvi, p. 706. Regarding the matter of security arrangements for Southeast Asia, which was discussed by Secretary Dulles during this briefing, see volume xii.

[2] Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

[3] Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[4] Theodore Francis Green of Rhode Island, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[5] Sam Rayburn of Texas, Democratic Floor Leader, House of Representatives.

[6] Robert B. Chiperfield of Illinois, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

[7] Thomas S. Gordon of Illinois, member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

[8] Henderson Lanham of Georgia, member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

[9] Carl Vinson of Georgia, ranking minority member of the House Armed Services Committee.

[10] Dewey Short of Missouri, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

The Secretary opened the meeting by saying that he thought the matters to be discussed fell under two headings, namely Korea and Indochina. The Korean phase of the Conference was quickly organized at Geneva and we were successful in preventing it from being established as a five-power conference.[11]

[Here follows additional discussion of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference.]

The Secretary went on with his exposition by turning to the Indochinese phase of the Geneva Conference. This was by far the tougher problem, as we could "insulate" the loss of Korea but it would be hard to do so for Indochina. When we had initially begun our massive aid program for Indochina we had set up three prerequisites as far as the French were concerned. There had to be a firm understanding that the Associated States would become independent; there had to be agreement for rapid and effective development of the indigenous forces of the area; and there had to be a good military plan for victory. All three of these prerequisites, which would lead to our desired objectives, had seemed to be met at the time, and we had therefore agreed to this massive aid program. The Navarre plan had envisaged few offensive accomplishments during the first year of operation, but by the end of the second year it was hoped that the war would be brought to a stage of guerrilla warfare handled by the native troops. This plan had developed satisfactorily and was still sound, but the French will for offensive action and even their ability to govern themselves have disintegrated.

By the time of the Berlin Conference the Laniel Government felt it must seek some means to achieve peace or it would fall; if this should happen, a peace-at-any-price government would probably succeed it. We therefore had agreed at Berlin to go along on a Geneva Conference, but the Secretary had warned Bidault of the strong possibility of Communist military attacks for political purposes. This prediction has come true with the action at Dien Bien Phu and the increased pressure in the rest of the area, with serious consequences for the French position. In order to bolster the French will and to help to insulate Indochina should it be lost the Secretary had conceived his "united action" approach. This was presented in his March 29 speech, the essence of which was first communicated to the British and the French and discussed with members of the Congress. After the speech we had held several talks with the various ambassadors from the interested countries of the area to sound out their thinking. As the French military situation deteriorated we began to think more actively about U.S. military intervention. In an April 3 meeting with members of the Congress, the conclusion was reached that U.S. military intervention required that the objectives outlined in our three pre-conditions set up earlier for our aid program should be met to an increased degree and that other states with interests in this area, particularly the UK and also Australia and New Zealand, should also agree to join in.[12] On April 4 after a conference with the President,[13] the latter sent a message to Churchill[14] explaining our views and asking whether the Secretary should go to London to confer. It was on the same day that we received the first informal request for military intervention from the French.[15] The Secretary then described Dillon's meeting with Bidault and Laniel late that Sunday night.[16] The Secretary said he thought this request was inspired by General Ely who had returned from his visit to the US and had given the French the impression that we would agree to intervene with air power. The Secretary then read part of his reply to this French request.

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[11] For documentation on the Korean phase of the Conference, see vol. XVI, pp. 1 ff.

Senator Johnson asked whether Ely had gotten his impression from the Pentagon or from the Secretary. The Secretary replied that he had definitely not gotten it from him and that he didn't believe he could accurately say from whom he had gotten it.

The Secretary continued that Churchill had replied to the President's letter by saying that he would like the Secretary to come to London, and the French had also said they wanted him to go. The British were at first opposed to any action in Southeast Asia along the lines of our plans, but after two days of discussion agreed with the Secretary on a communiqué.[17] The Secretary read the pertinent parts of this communiqué. He said that he had then gone to Paris to see Laniel and Bidault, and he read from the communiqué agreed upon with the French.[18] On his return the Secretary, in accordance with his agreement with Eden, called a meeting of the 10 nations for April 20 to discuss "united action". At the last moment Ambassador Makins said Eden had instructed him not to attend, which was quite embarrassing to us. We had therefore changed the meeting to one of the 16 nations involved in Korea plus the Associated States, and the Secretary reported to them on his London and Paris conversations.[19]

Representative Vorys asked whether the 10 knew why and on what basis the meeting was called. The Secretary said they did, but that they had had to go along in helping us to cover up. Representative Lanham asked whether Eden had given the Secretary anything in writing on their agreement to go ahead with 10-power talks, and the Secretary referred to the communiqué he had read. The Secretary said that Eden explained subsequently that he had forgotten about the Colombo Conference when he made the agreement and was afraid of the bad impression which a meeting of the 10 would have on the Asian Dominions. The Secretary's personal view was that Nehru had urged the British to suspend action and that the British had given in to this pressure.

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[12] Regarding the meeting of Apr. 3, see memorandum for the file, p. 1224.

[13] Regarding the conference of Apr. 4, see editorial note, p. 1236.

[14] For text of the message, see telegram 5179 to London, Apr. 4, p. 1238.

[15] See telegram 3710 from Paris, Apr. 5, p. 1236.

[16] Apr. 4.

[17] See telegram Secto 2 from London, Apr. 13, p. 1321.

[18] See footnote 3, p. 1336.

[19] Regarding the meeting of Apr. 20, see memorandum of conversations by Merchant, Apr. 18, p. 1349.

The Secretary continued that while he was attending the NATO meeting in Paris he received the second oblique request from the French for US intervention in the form of a cable that Bidault showed to him regarding the imminent fall of Dien Bien Phu.[20] The Secretary replied to this request by reiterating our earlier stand that the political conditions in the area must first be met, other countries must join in and Congress must give its approval.[21] The general mood of the French was that something must be done immediately but Bidault did recognize some value in the united action concept and agreed to try to bring the British along with us.

The Secretary and Admiral Radford talked to Eden in Paris but by then the British position had frozen against us. There were several reasons for the British views. The British, including Churchill, were almost pathological in their fear of the H-bomb and seemed almost in a panic over it. They therefore did not dare to get into any line of activity which might bring on H-bomb devastation. Secondly, there was increasing pressure from Nehru on the British, who felt that since they had given up their control of India there was little reason for them to fight to help the French keep Indochina. Thirdly, the British gave a much higher rating than we did to the risk that open Western intervention in Indochina would lead to Chinese intervention and global war. The Secretary said the British had always been reluctant to take chances in Asia although they would in Europe.

The Secretary said that Eden had gone back to London on April 24 where he had talked to Churchill and attended a Cabinet meeting which confirmed the reversal of the British position as expressed in the earlier Anglo-American communiqué. The Secretary said that he had taken Eden to task for this at Geneva and he read at length from a memorandum of a conversation he had had with him there.[22]

Senator Smith inquired when Eden had begun to hedge on his agreement with the Secretary, and the Secretary replied that it was somewhat before the Cabinet meeting referred to. The Secretary agreed that this was weak of the British and unfortunate for us and Representative Judd referred to a speech Eden had made in the House of Commons in which he almost reached the point of lauding the Communists. The Secretary said that the British liked to use the strategy of the carrot and the stick; that they had a long tradition of holding the balance of power and in being the middle man in resolving disputes on the continent. Representative McCormack agreed and said he had long thought that the UK had aspirations of being a middle man in settling the East-West dispute. Representative Judd referred to a conversation he had had with a Britisher in which the latter had said that the British were trying to save the Soviet Union and not destroy it because otherwise Britain would be at the mercy of the United States. Mr. Judd said he agreed with this interpretation.

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[20] See telegram Dulte 7 from Paris, Apr. 23, p. 1374.

[21] See telegram Dulte 1 from Geneva, Apr. 24, p. 1398.

[22] For records of the discussions between Secretary Dulles and Foreign Secretary Eden at Geneva, see vol. xvi, pp. 553 ff.

The Secretary said he would like to finish his discussion by explaining certain conclusions he had reached from the events of the past few weeks. In the first place we should not intervene in Indochina unless the preconditions he had enumerated earlier had been fulfilled. The French have not even made a firm or formal request for United States intervention or the internationalization of the war. In fact there was much opposition in France to do such action because it would mean the loss of French influence in Asia, the Colonialism issue would be again raised as it was in North Africa if the action should take the form of UN intervention, and some Frenchmen felt that internationalization was merely a scheme to keep France in the war. Laniel had almost apologized yesterday before the French Assembly for his earlier request for US intervention.[23] In the Secretary's view the French have not yet fulfilled the prerequisites we need from them. Further, if we do intervene, conditions must exist for a successful conclusion of the war. The French might be able to work out the preconditions of independence for the Associated States, effective training of the native troops and a sensible and offensive military plan; but we should not intervene until they do.

We also have a hostile or disinterested attitude on the part of other nations regarding participation, particularly on the part of the UK and Australia. After the Australian elections the Australians will quite probably come along with us and will pressure the British to the extent that they also may have to join in. However this aspect of intervention is largely academic until the other preconditions are met. The Secretary said that this in essence was the Administration's position on intervention.

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[23] Regarding the debate on Indochina in the National Assembly on May 4 and 6, see telegram 4258 from Paris, May 7, p. 1502.

The second conclusion which the Secretary had reached was that we should proceed as fast as we can to build up a Southeast Asian community, which would probably not include Vietnam, although we would hope to include Laos and Cambodia. Parenthetically, the Secretary remarked that the most hopeful formula for peace in Vietnam was for an agreement with the Vietminh on the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the establishment of a coalition government, and the holding of elections in six months, all of which would probably result in the loss of Vietnam to the Communists. Partition was not a likely solution because either side agreeing to partition of the country would lose the support of the people of the area.

The Secretary said that we may get the help of the British and other governments to strengthen the defense of Southeast Asia. The British may want to bring in Burma, to which the US agrees if it is possible to do so, and also India. The Secretary felt that this plan for a Southeast Asian Community might offer a fair chance to insulate the rest of Southeast Asia against the possible loss of Vietnam.

The Secretary's third conclusion was that in spite of the weakness of the British and French, we should not write them off. Although they were weak in Asia, they, and the UK in particular, had the possibility for strength in Europe. The Secretary said we have had to take a licking at Geneva because of British and French press briefings there which resulted in false and harmful interpretations of our position. In spite of our disappointment, however, he would agree with the President's remark to him this morning [24] that you would never win a battle if you got rid of all those who are timid, because 90 per cent of all troops were afraid under fire.

Senator Bridges asked what would be the effect on those countries who do faithfully stand by us if we continue to pat on the back those who will not stand by us. The Senator referred to India in particular and the testimony which Ambassador Allen and Mr. Stassen gave on the appropriations for aid to India. The Secretary replied that we must regard these problems from the viewpoint of the cold-blooded long range interest of the US. India would be much less satisfactory to us should it swing over to the Communists, and we therefore are trying to prevent that. However, our view of US security interests had led us to feel that military aid to Pakistan was desirable in spite of Indian objections and we had gone ahead with it. In sum, the Secretary was inclined to agree with the point of view Ambassador Allen had expressed in the appropriations hearings.

Senator Saltonstall asked whether we should not soon stop our aid to Vietnam since we apparently believed that it would be soon lost to the Communists. The Secretary said he would agree with this viewpoint in general. Senator Knowland asked what steps we could take to recover the arms we have given the Vietnamese to prevent the Communists from capturing them and using them against Thailand, et cetera. The Secretary said this was one of the things he had taken up with Secretary Wilson this morning and that he was having lunch with Admiral Radford and Secretary Wilson tomorrow to discuss the problem. He personally saw no reason why we could not simply remove our arms from Vietnam if a peace settlement were agreed to.

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[24] For the memorandum of the morning meeting, see p. 1466.

Representative Vorys asked whether it was likely that the Vietnamese people might throw over Bao Dai, form a new government and ask for US assistance without the French. The Secretary said that the problem was that there was little effective leadership in Vietnam and although he would agree that Bao Dai was not an impressive leader there was no one else whom the French had developed who could take over.

Representative Judd asked whether there was any chance the French might pull out of Indochina and whether this would be good or bad for us. He said he did not think the military situation was too bleak because the rains would save us by stopping the fighting. The Secretary stated he was not so sure that the rains would stop the fighting and said in response to Representative McCormack's question that it would be quite hard for the French to pull out without first making a peace settlement.

[Here follows discussion of Southeast Asia security arrangements.]

751G.13/5–654 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 6, 1954—10 a. m.

2238. Repeated information Paris 768, Hanoi 412. Governor Tri of North Vietnam lunched privately with me today. He is unfeignedly pessimistic over political situation in South Vietnam. In fact, on conclusion of Governors' conference today with remnant of Vietnamese Cabinet, he told Governors and Ministers present, "There is no longer any Central Government in Vietnam."

Tri's sole solution for present crisis is that Bao Dai should return at once and personally take over Prime Ministership. However, he said that Bao Dai could not be persuaded to such a step unless US intervened with him and made urgent representations to that effect. I offered personal comment that if indeed Bao Dai came back to head Government, he could conveniently leave his "eminent empire" and evil genius Nguyen De behind.

Tri said that at Cabinet meeting from which he had just come Government had at long last approved his plan (now advocated by Defense Minister Quat) for revamping entire Vietnamese military system. This in other words, would be to start from basis of regional militia to recruit from this mass of quasitrained manpower the so-called light battalions and, after these had been blooded, to form regular heavy battalions.

Tri said his requirement for speedy aid in funds and arms for militia in North Vietnam remained as urgent as ever but that it was difficult to get Central Government moving in presenting a formal request. I said that STEM, Embassy, and MAAG were all interested in helping but that we had to maintain sound principle that such appeals for our assistance should come from Central Government as otherwise we would have every local governor and chief of province sitting on our doorsteps with his own pet project.

On question of partition, which naturally is of utmost concern to Tonkinese, I suggested to Tri that, without indicating this thought had come from me, he might do well to call this afternoon on my British colleague and discuss this issue.

McClintock

751G.00/5–654 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT Saigon, May 6, 1954—2 p. m.

2242. Sent Geneva niact 56, Paris niact 769. I saw De Jean this morning on his return from Hanoi. He said that renewed fighting opened at Dien Bien Phu last night but that he did not have details as yet. Enemy ack-ack is proving more effective and French have been averaging losses of three planes a day during past two or three days.

De Jean said that General Navarre, in response to his point blank question whether it would be possible to send a relief column to Dien Bien Phu, had replied in the negative. Navarre said it would require between 12 and 15 battalions which he could not find and would place a logistics requirement which he could not meet. In other words Dien Bien Phu will inevitably be lost unless, in Navarre's judgment, a cease-fire is contrived in next few days.

De Jean said that he vigorously opposed the idea of a cease-fire and had so telegraphed Bidault last night and would repeat this recommendation with even greater urgency this morning. He said Navarre was so wrought up over Dien Bien Phu, which was his own creation, that he would do almost anything to save it, but that with his monolithic concentration on the battle he could not see that a cease-fire would amount to capitulation. Furthermore De Jean had sought to point out to Navarre that a cease-fire without agreed conditions in the context of an armistice would be fatal not only to French Expeditionary Force in Indochina but to position of France in Europe.

Despite Navarre's fixation on need for immediate cease-fire to save Dien Bien Phu, De Jean is hopeful that his government will heed his advice and not that of Navarre. He is telegraphing Bidault that to agree to a cease-fire at this time will mean not only loss of Southeast Asia but losses to France in Europe almost too vast to calculate.

De Jean, who is a far more rugged and courageous man than Navarre, will point out that after fall of Dien Bien Phu French still have military cards in their hands which can be played. Rain has already commenced to fall at Dien Bien Phu and with increase of monsoon downpour Viet Minh command will soon have to move if its battle force at Dien Bien Phu is not to become marooned. French military will have opportunity to strike Viet Minh while endeavoring to regroup if Cogny can be given some reinforcement and if air power can be brought to bear.

I believe that we should support De Jean's recommendations to his government with utmost urgency. We now confront a situation in which two top French officials in Indochina are urging diametrically opposed policies and it is the irony of war that it is the General who wishes to surrender while the diplomat wishes to forge ahead.

McClintock

751G.00/5–654 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 6, 1954—3 p. m.

2244. Sent priority Geneva 57, priority Paris 770. During my talk this morning with DeJean we canvassed internal political situation in Vietnam. DeJean deprecated in strongest terms decree of Bao Dai handing security forces to Binh Xuyen. He said it was the most appalling action that had been taken in political field since he had been Commissioner General.

On question of Cao Daist Pope's open letter to Ho Chi Minh,[1] DeJean was more hopeful. He agreed that Quat's efforts to prevent knowledge of Pope's appeal spreading to populace had on whole been successful and that by and large mass of Vietnamese people are in ignorance of Cao Daist leader's message. Strangely, Viet Minh radio appears not yet to have picked up Pope's communication to Ho Chi Minh.

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[1] In telegram 2197 from Saigon, May 5, the Embassy transmitted a rough text of the broadcast of May 1 by Pham Cong Tac, the Cao Dai Pope, to Ho Chi Minh, urging the latter to agree to a coalition in order to avoid partition. (751G.00/5–454)

Independently from various sources both DeJean and I agreed that Vietnamese for most part have already anticipated and discounted loss of Dien-Bien-Phu. For example, yesterday Governor Tri told me that in Tonkin final fall of fortress would not occasion any excitement since Tonkinese were long inured to battle. Even civilian French element here have already accepted fate of Dien-Bien-Phu philosophically.

Our principal concern remains deterioration of morale in Vietnamese National Army. I gave DeJean substance of my talks with Hinh and Quat. DeJean said that Navarre stressed with what he thought undue emphasis poor morale in Vietnamese Army and danger that after Dien-Bien-Phu there would be general demoralization. DeJean took a different view and thought that army would not stampede because of Dien-Bien-Phu. However, we were in agreement that something radical must be done to improve morale in army, particularly since Vietnamese mobilization scheme has thus far been total failure.

I told DeJean that this evening I was dining with Hinh and could ask him if he would sit down at my table with Quat and work out a *modus vivendi* to end present intolerable situation in which Minister of National Defense and Commander in Chief are at swords points. If Hinh agreed, I would then ask Quat if he would come to dine with me and Hinh alone. DeJean thought this a good idea, and I shall endeavor to execute it.

McClintock

751G.00/5–654 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY SAIGON, May 6, 1954—5 p. m.

2264. Repeated information priority Paris 779, priority Tokyo 92. Tokyo for General Partridge. MAAG Saigon has received message dated May 6 stating CAT pilots McGovern and Bufford brought down by anti-aircraft fire over Dien Bien Phu and that there is no hope for them. DeJean tells me plane exploded mid-air. CAT air drop operation has been suspended. Further details will be furnished when available.[1]

McClintock

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[1] In telegram 2275 from Saigon, May 7, McClintock stated that the Embassy had received reports that CAT crews were "on strike" as the result of disgust with the failure of the French Air Force to provide sufficient flak suppression cover. (751G.00/5–754) Army message OARMA MC 224–54 from Saigon, May 7, the Joint Daily Situation Report, included the following comment with regard to the loss of the CAT flight: "Even though Viet Minh knew American CAT pilots flying C–119s to Dien Bien Phu they did not have absolute confirmation. If objects found as result of this crash identifying pilots as Americans this would be strong Communist propaganda tool." (751G.00/5–754) In telegram 651 from Hanoi, May 11, it was reported that there had been no strike of CAT pilots and that CAT flights had been resumed on May 8. (751G.00/5–1154)

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 195th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, May 6, 1954, 10 a. m.[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

The following were present at the 195th meeting of the National Security Council: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Acting Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Attorney General; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; the Federal Civil Defense Administrator; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Secretary of the Navy; General Ridgway for the Secretary of the Army; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; Robert R. Bowie, Department of State; the White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the chief points taken.

1. *Report on the Geneva Conference and the Indochina Situation* (NSC Actions Nos. 1086–*b* and 1104–*b*)[2]

Mr. Cutler pointed out that since the President had already heard directly from Secretary Dulles most of his report,[3] he had asked the Vice President to preside over the Council meeting until discussion of Secretary Dulles' report commenced, at which time the President would join the meeting.

Secretary Dulles said that he would begin his report in narrative form. The first point was the familiar position agreed upon among the British, the French and ourselves at London and Paris on April 12, 13 and 14. This agreement, to examine the possibility of establishing a collective defense of Southeast Asia against Communist aggression, said Secretary Dulles, had been agreed at the highest levels by both the French and the British Governments. Indeed, Secretary Dulles had gone over this agreement personally with Sir Winston Churchill.[4]

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[1] Prepared by S. Everett Gleason, Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, on May 8.

[2] For NSC Action No. 1086, see memorandum of discussion at the 192d Meeting of the National Security Council, Apr. 6, p. 1250; for NSC Action No. 1104, see memorandum of discussion at the 194th Meeting, Apr. 29, p. 1431.

[3] Secretary Dulles left Geneva on May 3 for Washington. The President's appointment book indicates that Dulles had breakfast with the President on May 5, presumably briefing him on the Geneva Conference and the Indochina situation at that time. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments")

After Secretary Dulles' return, as he told Mr. Eden he would, he proceeded to call a meeting of the Ambassadors of the nine nations who were to take part in the proposed regional grouping for the defense of Southeast Asia. However, on Easter Sunday,[5] just prior to the Secretary's meeting with the nine Ambassadors, the British Ambassador called on Secretary Dulles at his house, to say that Mr. Eden had informed him that he was not to take part in the meeting with the other Ambassadors. This had been a shock to Secretary Dulles, in view of Eden's previous agreement with Dulles. In order to prevent a public airing of Anglo-American differences, Secretary Dulles hastily arranged a meeting under a different formula. He undertook to call together the representatives of the sixteen nations which had taken part on our side in the Korean war. This device was chosen to fuzz up the British failure to proceed as planned, with the other nine nations on the Southeast Asia problem.

Later in the week Secretary Dulles went to Paris to attend the NATO meeting. There Mr. Eden explained his shift of position as resulting from overlooking the meeting of the Colombo powers. Eden said he believed it would have been a mistake to try to hold the scheduled nine-power meeting until after the conclusion of the Colombo Conference. He had therefore pulled Sir Roger Makins out of the Washington meeting. By this time, Secretary Dulles expressed the opinion that the British had decided not to join in any conference at all with respect to the defense of Southeast Asia. It was not, therefore, a postponement but a repudiation of any action at all at the present time or any action in the future which might lead to armed intervention by British forces in Indochina.

The next step was Admiral Radford's arrival in Paris. As he has already reported to the National Security Council, Radford talked at once upon arrival with Secretary Dulles and Mr. Eden. As a result of these talks, Mr. Eden changed his plans to go directly to Geneva, and instead returned to London for a Saturday meeting with Churchill and a Sunday meeting with the whole British Cabinet. Thereafter he went to Geneva.

Despite the conversations which Secretary Dulles and Admiral Radford had with the British prior to Geneva, the British adhere to their position—that is, no involvement in any military action in Indochina and no planning for any other kind of action in Indochina until after the conclusion of the Geneva Conference.

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[4] No record of a Dulles–Churchill discussion on Indochina during the Secretary's visit to London, Apr. 11–14, has been found. The memorandum of the Dulles–Churchill dinner meeting of Apr. 12 contains no indication that the subject was discussed. For text of the memorandum, see volume VI. For records of the Secretary's discussions with Foreign Secretary Eden at London, see pp. 1307–1323 *passim*.

[5] Apr. 18.

After Eden reached Geneva, Secretary Dulles said he had frank talks with him.[6] Secretary Dulles' irritation had been increased by the fact that when the Korean phase of the Conference opened and the United States was subjected to vicious attacks by Molotov and Chou En-lai, not a single representative of a Western power undertook to stand up and defend the policy of the United States or even to keep the historical record straight.

At this point Secretary Dulles read several paragraphs of the memorandum of his conversations with Eden at Geneva. Eden did not undertake to reply to Secretary Dulles' complaints at this time, but subsequently sent a memorandum which constituted a reply to that of Secretary Dulles. The Secretary read portions of the Eden memorandum to the Council. In it Eden made much of India's position and of the desirability of inducing Nehru to take a cooperative attitude, and set forth a proposal for the defense of Southeast Asia.

To this Eden memorandum Secretary Dulles replied on May 2, stating that he would bring to the President's attention Eden's proposal for the defense of Southeast Asia. There was much in the Eden proposal with which we could agree, said Secretary Dulles; but we clearly believe the danger to Southeast Asia to be more immediate than Eden does.

Secretary Dulles then said that he would say no more about the British phase of this problem until the President came into the meeting, since subsequent British developments had not been told to the President. While awaiting the President's appearance, Secretary Dulles said that he would go back and describe the French phase of the negotiations.

Secretary Dulles pointed out that before he had gone to Europe there had been a series of talks with the French in Washington, both on the political and on the military level. General Ely, for example, had talked with Admiral Radford.[7] Secretary Dulles noted that there had been a great deal of talk in the newspapers about French requests for additional U.S. military assistance, but no formal requests had ever come from the French Government for any U.S. military intervention in Indochina. What had occurred were two separate suggestions for U.S. air strikes, specifically in aid of Dien Bien Phu. The first of these informal suggestions had been made by Bidault and Laniel to Ambassador Dillon in Paris on April 4.[8] It called for carrier-based air strikes, and the suggestion, thought Secretary Dulles, had originated from an erroneous impression brought back to Paris by General Ely that the United States would be receptive to a request for an air strike. Secretary Dulles insisted that there could have been no reasonable basis for such a presumption on the part of the French, for he had made it clear in his talks with the French, as had Admiral Radford in his talks with General Ely, that military intervention by the United States in any form would be impossible unless the French met certain fundamentals and conditions. Despite this, Ely evidently thought that the United States would respond to the French suggestions on a crash basis.

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[6] For records of the Dulles–Eden conversations at Geneva, see vol. xvi, pp. 553 ff.; for records of their discussions with regard to the formation of a collective security organization for Southeast Asia, see volume xii.

[7] For documentation on General Ely's conversations with Admiral Radford and other U.S. officials at Washington, Mar. 20–25, see pp. 1137–1158 *passim*.

[8] See telegram 3710 from Paris, Apr. 5, p. 1236.

The second informal French request for a U.S. air strike came somewhat later in Paris when Bidault showed Secretary Dulles a message from Navarre which stated that Dien Bien Phu would be lost in 48 hours without an air strike by the United States.[9] On this occasion, said Secretary Dulles, he repeated to Bidault and Laniel the arguments he had used on the occasion of the earlier French request. Bidault took the position that everything depended on Dien Bien Phu. If the fortress were saved, then there would be time to think of the fundamentals and the conditions which Secretary Dulles advanced. If the fortress were lost, there would be no point in discussing these fundamentals. France would be through in Indochina. By this time, added Secretary Dulles, the French undoubtedly knew that the British were running out on their April 13 commitment to join in a nine-power examination of an arrangement to defend Southeast Asia.

There is a very sharp difference of opinion in France, continued Secretary Dulles, with respect to internationalizing the conflict in Indochina. The Cabinet is divided. The Chamber of Deputies and the public are divided. There is a strong belief that if France agreed to internationalize the conflict her hands would be tied and she would be unable to achieve a settlement at Geneva which would allow her to get out of Indochina. There is an overwhelming sentiment in France to get out. Furthermore, there was no real government in France. France was just drifting. The French don't dare to have a full Cabinet meeting. Bidault has a relatively free hand at the Geneva Conference simply because the French Cabinet cannot agree on what instructions to send him. Laniel, predicted Secretary Dulles, would probably secure a slender vote of confidence from the French Chamber this afternoon, thanks to massive abstentions by the Deputies.[10] In view of all this, it is of course very difficult for the United States to deal with France on any responsible basis.

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[9] See telegram Dulte 7 from Paris, Apr. 23, p. 1374.

[10] Regarding the action of the French National Assembly, see telegram 4258 from Paris, May 7, p. 1502.

Secretary Dulles then stated his conviction that whether or not the British would act with us initially to try to save Indochina, it was a *sine qua non* that we have a satisfactory agreement with France on the following fundamentals:

1. Genuine independence for the Associated States.
2. A division of responsibility with the French which would enable the United States to play a much more active part in training the indigenous armed forces of the Associated States.
3. A sharing of responsibility for planning military operations between France and the United States so that U.S. forces would not be mere tools of a French Chief of Staff.
4. French agreement to stay in the fight in Indochina.

It had not been possible as yet to discuss with the French any of the above conditions, although Secretary Dulles had hinted his willingness to do so. The French had not risen to the bait, and Secretary Dulles doubted the wisdom of any U.S. belligerency in Indochina until the French agreed with us on these fundamentals. If they could be prevailed on to do so, we might go into Indochina on the gamble that the British would also ultimately join, if for no other reason than pressure by the ANZUS powers. The British were trying hard to please Nehru on the one hand and the ANZUS powers on the other. Foreign Minister Casey had told Secretary Dulles that if the present government was reelected Australia would take a strong line, but it could do nothing until after the May 29 elections.[11] Secretary Dulles thought it likely that the Menzies [12] government would be reelected. If this happens and the French have a government, Secretary Dulles thought that the United States might well consider armed intervention in Indochina without the British. But thus far there was no French government with which this matter could be effectively discussed. The situation was just the opposite of that in 1947 when the British, feeling unequal to their commitments in Greece, had paved the way for an orderly take-over of their commitments by the United States. The United Nations had supervised this replacement, and Secretary Dulles expressed the opinion that such UN supervision would also be desirable in the case of Southeast Asia. France, however, was opposed to getting involved in the UN lest a precedent be set which would prove embarrassing in Morocco.

Secretary Dulles stated that he had got a distinct impression from Molotov and Chou En-lai at Geneva that the Communists felt much greater confidence in the strength of their position than we had earlier estimated. If the United States intervened in Indochina and the UK stayed out, Secretary Dulles believed that there was a much greater chance of Chinese overt intervention than would be the case if the British were in it with us.

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[11] Reference is presumably to remarks by Foreign Minister Casey at the May 2 meeting at Geneva between Dulles, Casey, and Foreign Minister T. C. Webb of New Zealand. For text of the memorandum of that conversation, see vol. xvi, p. 654.

[12] Robert G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia.

At this point Secretary Dulles said that he had covered for the Council the ground which he had already gone over with the President. Mr. Cutler went to the President's office, and the President entered the meeting at 10 : 45 a. m.

Secretary Dulles then informed the Council of the latest developments. Yesterday afternoon he had received a message from Under Secretary Smith at Geneva, outlining a proposal by Anthony Eden along the lines of Eden's earlier proposal to Secretary Dulles in answer to the Secretary's letter to Eden of May 2, which had been mentioned earlier.[13] This memorandum of Mr. Eden to Secretary Smith was read by Secretary Dulles to the Council. Eden said that he would agree to recommend that the UK take part at once with the U.S., France, Australia and New Zealand in an examination by the Five-Power staff agency (Singapore) of the Indochina and Southeast Asia situation. These talks would take place in the light of the Prime Minister's statement that the UK would not give any undertakings about military action in Indochina until after the Geneva Conference. Eden's memorandum added that it would be understood that the Colombo Conference powers (Pakistan, India, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia), plus Thailand, would be kept advised of the progress of the work of the five powers and, where appropriate and agreed, they would be invited to take part with the five powers. A joint public announcement of intentions was also suggested by the Eden memorandum. Secretary Smith had added the comment that this new proposal represented a considerable British concession, and recommended that the U.S. concur in this proposal and agree to a joint announcement. Secretary Dulles also agreed that the new five-power proposal represented an advance in the British position and placed the UK in approximately the same position which it had occupied before it had backed out of the agreement to take part with the nine other powers in an examination of the possibilities of defending Southeast Asia. Thus the British would now agree at least to include Indochina in their planning, and also agree to do something prior to the conclusion of the Geneva Conference. If this represented an advance, the new British proposal entailed certain difficulties. One of them was the proposal to bring in the Colombo powers. Secretary Dulles said that he had already informed Eden that bringing these powers in would raise serious problems for the United States if we could not likewise bring in South Korea and Formosa, which the British opposed. Secretary Dulles thought that the proposal to include Thailand and Burma was excellent. The British also hoped to keep India benevolently neutral.

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[13] Eden's latest memorandum was transmitted to Dulles in telegram Dulte 51, May 5, vol. xvi, p. 698.

At this point the President strongly reaffirmed his anxiety over any arrangement which was confined to the five white nations and left out the Asian states. Secretary Dulles commented that at yesterday's briefing of the Congressional leaders [14] he had likewise indicated his own opposition to entering into arrangements only with these five powers and not with any of the Asian states themselves. The President suggested, however, that we might cast the purpose of such a five-power examination in such fashion that it would seem to be conferring voluntary aid on a group of Asian states which sought such aid cooperatively.

Secretary Dulles said that he would discuss a reply to this British proposal, at luncheon today following the meeting with Admiral Radford and Secretary Wilson.[15] On that occasion he said he would also point out the need for machinery which would provide prompt replies to the messages which were flowing in from Geneva. He was going to suggest perhaps that he and Radford and Wilson each designate individuals to work together to get quick action on the Geneva messages. From now on out the Conference must largely be run from Washington.

With respect to the joint public announcement of the five-power arrangement, the President stated that it should be phrased along the lines of the suggestions he had made a few minutes ago with respect to the purpose.

Mr. Cutler asked about the possibility of including the three Associated States and the Philippines in the five-power talks. Secretary Dulles replied that the British would undoubtedly oppose associating Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the talks, for fear of getting the UK involved in the hostilities in Indochina.

Secretary Dulles then announced that the State Department had likewise got further information on the French position.[16] Bidault, he said, had asked the French Cabinet for permission to make the following proposal when the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference began:

1. The problem in Vietnam is purely Vietnamese, and there is no question of partition, but only a military struggle for control of the government.

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[14] For a record of the briefing of 25 Congressional leaders by Secretary Dulles on May 5, see p. 1471.

[15] No record of the luncheon meeting has been found in Department of State files.

[16] The U.S. Delegation at Geneva received this additional information on the French position from the French Delegation on May 5. It was transmitted to Washington in telegram Secto 106 of the same date. For text of Secto 106, see vol. xvi, p. 694.

2. The situation is different in Laos and Cambodia, which are victims of external aggression.
3. There should be a cease-fire guaranteed by adequate military and administrative controls under the supervision of international control machinery.
4. The cease-fire would take effect only when guaranties had been embodied in the armistice conventions and when the control machinery had been established and was in place.
5. The controls would be based on the conditions publicly announced by Laniel on March 5.
6. After peace had been established by the cease-fire, political and economic problems could be examined.

After reading the above French proposal, Secretary Dulles gave Under Secretary Smith's commentary on the Bidault proposal, which was in effect that unless or until we have firm support in the U.S. for some other solution, we simply cannot prevent the French from making such a proposal at Geneva, even though it is far below a successful prosecution of the Navarre Plan.[17] If accepted by the French Cabinet, the Bidault proposal would at least be a better French initial position than we might have feared. We ought to urge the French to accept UN auspices for the control machinery. Secretary Smith doubted whether the French would actually remain firm in insisting on satisfactory controls, but believed that they would slide rapidly toward the expected Communist demand for an immediate cease-fire without controls. The important element in forestalling French capitulation will be the degree to which we can strengthen their hand by increasing Communist uncertainty as to possible U.S. intervention and by achieving success in organizing some kind of Southeast Asian coalition.

The President stated that he had no objection to the French making use of the idea of U.S. intervention as a means of influencing the Communists, but our own people at Geneva should not discuss the possibility of intervention. Secretary Dulles expressed agreement with the President's view, and the President went on to point out that if U.S. officials began talking of U.S. unilateral intervention, such talk would be completely inconsistent with our whole foreign policy. The President concluded by stressing that there could be no U.S. belligerency in Indochina without Congressional agreement.

The Vice President then addressed the following question to the Secretary of State: "Am I to understand that we intend to go along with the new British suggestion to use the Five-Power staff agency as the sole vehicle for concerted action in Southeast Asia? Or do we propose, parallel with exploration in the Five-Power staff agency, to continue to explore the possibility of a regional grouping with Asian nations and not merely with the five white powers?"

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[17] The views of the U.S. Delegation on the French position were contained in telegram Secto 110 from Geneva, May 5; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 696.

Secretary Dulles replied by stating his feeling that while he favored accepting the British proposal with respect to the Five-Power staff agency (whose terms of reference would be enlarged and its personnel upgraded), he thought this should only be done as one element in a broader political framework which would include more than the five powers. The Vice President commented that in his opinion the five-power arrangement would be almost as bad for the United States as would be unilateral U.S. intervention, since it would be interpreted by the Asian nations as sheer colonialism.

After the Vice President had repeated his question in slightly different wording, Secretary Dulles again assured him that the Five-Power staff agency would not be the top body, but would be merely a mechanism through which to try to create a broader grouping including Asian states. The broader grouping would be in a position to draw on the intelligence information which was available to the Five-Power staff agency. This, in short, would be a subsidiary body rather than the heart of a coalition. The great question, said Secretary Dulles, was whether the British would accept this view of the function of the Five-Power staff agency.

The Vice President then inquired whether anyone had given thought to bringing General Templer or Mr. MacDonald to Geneva as advisers. The Vice President thought both these men had a keen understanding of the realities of the Communist threat to Southeast Asia.

Secretary Dulles then asked Admiral Radford for his views with respect to the British five-power proposal. Admiral Radford replied that of course the proposal would require a careful appraisal by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. At first glance, however, he thought the British were laying the groundwork for a set-up which would be very much in their favor but not in ours if the proposal excluded Asian nations. Furthermore, he predicted that it would take a very long time to work out the British proposal—so long, in fact, that it would be of no use in meeting the current emergency in Southeast Asia. The Five-Power staff agency was already pretty well agreed on the military requirements for the defense of Southeast Asia, but if it was now proposed to add the political and economic problems, these would take months to resolve.

The President said that he well understood the points Admiral Radford had made, but he nevertheless felt that the psychological appeal of the British proposal was important, despite the substantive difficulties. The Five-Power staff agency would at least provide a good facade behind which the real work could be done by the others.

Secretary Wilson queried whether our real difficulty didn't result from the lack of participation of any Asian nations of large size. Thailand, for example, was too small to carry much weight. The President pointed out that small or not, such nations as Thailand at least provided the semblance of Asian participation.

Secretary Dulles reminded the Council that in Molotov's Geneva speech,[18] referring to the proposed Southeast Asian regional grouping, he had charged that not a single respectable Asian nation would agree to join the coalition. The President replied by asking why no one ever took such occasions as this to stand up and blast Russian colonialism. In any event, said the President, the new British proposal represented such a significant advance from their previous position that the United States should certainly follow it through.

Dr. Flemming then inquired as to the nature of the U.S. attitude toward the French proposal regarding a cease-fire. The President replied that initially we would have to wait and see what precisely this Bidault proposal really means. We would have to look at all the possible alternatives, but we certainly wouldn't get anywhere if all we did was to tell the French to keep on fighting. On the other hand, if the French and the Associated States eventually agreed that the Communist terms for an armistice were hopeless, perhaps we could really get somewhere and induce other Asian nations to follow our objectives.

Mr. Cutler then inquired as to the length of time the United States would have to reply to the Eden and the Bidault proposals. Secretary Dulles said that the British proposal must be answered today, at least in a preliminary fashion. There was not the same urgency for a reply on the French cease-fire proposal, since the French Cabinet in any event would drag its feet. This would allow time for a more careful analysis of the implications of the Bidault proposal.

Mr. Cutler pointed out that he was inquiring whether the Planning Board could be useful in either of these two matters. He said he assumed that the preliminary response to the British would be along the lines of the President's statements. Should the Planning Board therefore go on to consider the French proposal at its meeting this afternoon? The President agreed that the latter would be desirable, and when Secretary Wilson observed that there wasn't very much we could do about the French cease-fire proposal in any case, the President pointed out to him that the French would certainly want to know whether we would support them if they presented their proposal at Geneva, and so, for that matter, do we.

Mr. Cutler then said that this seemed an opportune moment to brief the Council on the report which was being made by the Operations Coordinating Board with respect to the possibility of setting up an international volunteer air group for combat operations in Southeast Asia. While, said Mr. Cutler, he thought that the creation of such a volunteer air group came within the existing U.S. policy on Southeast Asia, he felt, nevertheless, that the progress of study of this problem should be reported to the Council. Mr. Cutler said he believed that the air group was to be equipped with three squadrons of F–86 planes.

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[18] Reference is to the speech delivered by Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister and Chairman of the Soviet Delegation, on Apr. 29 at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference. Telegram Secto 41, Apr. 29, summarized the proceedings of the session; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 157.

The President commented that the volunteer air group ought to have in it a certain number of multi-trained pilots so that if, for example, the question of using B–29's ever came up again, such planes could be provided without involving us in the danger of having to use U.S. Air Force pilots in combat operations.

Mr. Cutler then inquired whether it was advisable to ask CIA to provide an intelligence estimate as to the probable Chinese Communist reaction to the creation of such an international volunteer air group. U.S. citizens, of course, might volunteer for combat action, and the question whether this was feasible would presumably be studied by the Department of Defense. Mr. Allen Dulles agreed to provide such an intelligence estimate.

Secretary Dulles inquired whether the proposed volunteer air group would be under the ultimate control of the President. Mr. Cutler replied in the negative, indicating that we would have no responsibility for the group, which would be developed along the lines of General Chennault's "Flying Tigers" in the second World War. This would mean, said Secretary Dulles, that our volunteers could join the air group without Congressional approval. The answer seemed to be in the affirmative.

With respect to Chinese Communist reaction, Secretary Dulles expressed the opinion that the Chinese Communists would intervene if they wanted to, but the use of a volunteer air group rather than regular U.S. combat forces would enable the Chinese, if they wanted to, to avoid intervention without loss of face.

. . . .

The National Security Council:[19]

a. Discussed the situation with respect to Indochina in the light of an oral report by the Secretary of State on the Geneva Conference and the Indochina situation.

b. Agreed that the United States should be willing, in response to a British proposal, to participate in an examination by the existing Five-Power staff agency (US, UK, France, Australia and New Zealand) of the situation in Southeast Asia (including Indochina); provided that:

(1) The purpose of such examination is to explore means by which these participating governments may assist the countries of Southeast Asia in a cooperative effort to defend themselves.

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[19] Points *a–e* below constituted NSC Action No. 1106, May 6, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

(2) It is made clear that such an examination is supplementary to continued efforts by the United States to organize a regional grouping pursuant to NSC Action No. 1086–*b* or 1104–*b*, and is neither a substitute for nor the nucleus of such a grouping.

c. Noted that the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, would recommend to the President means for promptly answering questions raised by developments at the Geneva Conference.

d. Directed the NSC Planning Board to study urgently the implications of the latest proposal on Indochina which the French are contemplating presenting to the Geneva Conference.

e. Agreed that the Operations Coordinating Board should proceed with its proposed further study of an international volunteer air group for combat operations in Southeast Asia for consideration by the Council, including an estimate by the Central Intelligence Agency of probable Chinese Communist reaction.

. . . .

Note: The action in *b* above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State for appropriate action. The action in *c* above subsequently transmitted to the Secretaries of State and Defense. The action in *e* above subsequently transmitted to the Operations Coordinating Board. . . .

2. *Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security*

The Director of Central Intelligence said that there was very little new information on the situation at Dien Bien Phu. However, four more French positions had been lost since his last report to the Council. As a result of the heavy rains the river which ran through the French positions was flooding, with the result that water was seeping into all the low points. In due course the river may reach a point which will completely separate the French positions on either side of its banks.

Admiral Radford interrupted to state that the French had actually lost yet another position, making five. He estimated that there were about 4000 effective troops left. Since April 25, 450 additional men had been dropped in, and the French were still trying to drop in additional volunteers.

The President commented in admiration on the great gallantry of General de Castries' men. This would be something like the siege of Carthage in historical retrospect, and he was at a loss to understand why the French had not taken advantage of the magnificent performance that these men were giving.

Admiral Radford pointed out that the relief column actually appears to be en route to the relief of the fortress, but it was being so badly handled that the French were likely to lose the relief force as well as the Dien Bien Phu garrison. It was a matter of too little and too late. Mr. Allen Dulles commented that he had heard a report this morning that the attempt to relieve Dien Bien Phu had been abandoned.

Mr. Dulles then warned the Council that it was vitally important to watch the military situation in the delta area. General Navarre was refusing to reinforce General Cogny there, and the situation is very dangerous.

. . . .

S/S–NSC files, lot 63 D 351, NSC 5405 Series

Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense (Wilson) to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay)

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, May 6, 1954.

Subject: Suspension of U.S. Military Aid to Indochina in Event of a Cease Fire

Forwarded herewith, for the consideration of the National Security Council at an early date, are the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the above subject, with which I concur.[1]

C. E. WILSON

[Annex]

Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, [April 30, 1954.]

Subject: Suspension of U.S. Military Aid to Indochina in Event of a Cease Fire

1. The possibility exists that a cease fire in Indochina may be agreed upon either at Geneva or unilaterally between the French and the Viet Minh. In that event, the Viet Minh would likely covertly extend their control over large areas currently held by French Union Forces and cause major defections of these forces. This would result in a quick deterioration of the entire French Union position and enable the

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[1] The recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were approved by the National Security Council at its 196th Meeting, May 8; for the memorandum of the discussion at that meeting, see p. 1505.

Viet Minh to seize large amounts of U.S. Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP) matériel and supplies.

2. In light of the foregoing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider it necessary that the United States adopt the following position reference future MDAP assistance to Indochina:

> In the event of a cease fire in Indochina, the shipment of military end items under U.S. MDAP provided under the "Agreement for Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina between the United States of America and Cambodia, France, Laos, and Vietnam," will immediately be suspended, except for such spares and associated maintenance items necessary to the maintenance of equipment in operations. The entire question of U.S. aid to Indochina will be reexamined in the light of circumstances then existing.

3. It is the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the "Agreement for Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina between the United States of America and Cambodia, France, Laos, and Vietnam," of 23 December 1950,[2] provides adequate legal basis for subject suspension.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that you secure governmental acceptance of the position proposed in paragraph 2 above.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
ARTHUR RADFORD
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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[2] 3 UST (pt. 2), pp. 2756–2799.

751G.00/5–754: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET

SAIGON, May 7, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received 8:28 a. m.]

2261. Repeated information Paris 778, Tokyo 91.[1] Tokyo for General Partridge. DeJean this morning went over ground we had covered yesterday re military strategy to be followed following fall of Dien-Bien-Phu. He said Cogny had told him that he was optimistic on chances of holding delta "provided the three Viet Minh divisions now at Dien-Bien-Phu are prevented from reaching delta." DeJean who seems to have received this concept from Cogny, is urging on [garble] need to interdict route 41 from Tuangiao to Delta by heavy aerial bombardment. He told me this morning that he had yesterday inquired of Paris if there were any possibility of training French crews for

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[1] Also repeated to Geneva as telegram Tosec 94, May 7.

B–29s if in fact US Government could loan these aircraft for this purpose.

I told DeJean that we should not be misled by wishful thinking that airpower alone was an easy way out. I said that in impending rainy season most of territory through which Viet Minh divisions will march will be covered by impenetrable clouds and mist. B–29s with French crews would not under such conditions be able to find suitable targets. I likewise cautioned DeJean from listening to General Lauzin's over-simplified description of how Shoran bombing works, and added that in my opinion Lauzin had no concept of this highly technical operation.

If—as we may expect—French Government makes another last minute appeal to US for B–29s, I think we could contemplate loaning these aircraft only on condition that Shoran stations are established here (see paragraph 2 Embtel 2122)[2] and if competent US Shoran specialists were added to French B–29 crews to handle Shoran bombing. Such specialists could wear French uniforms and act in capacity as military advisors to French Air Force. We know that Chinese military advisors are already operating in field with Viet Minh forces, and I see no reason why we cannot apply same concept in case of Shoran bombing.

Even if foregoing suggestion should commend itself to Department of Defense, we should be under no illusions that B–29s and Shoran bombing will mean deliverance in this war. I have discussed this telegram with General O'Daniel who quite rightly observes that ultimate military decision will depend upon use of ground troops with properly coordinated air support.

McClintock

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[2] Telegram 2122 from Saigon, Apr. 26, regarding air operations in Indochina, is not printed. (751G.00/4–2654)

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"

Memorandum of Conversation, by Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

TOP SECRET [Washington,] May 7, 1954.

At a meeting in the President's office this morning with Dulles,[1] three topics were discussed:

1. Whether the President should approve paragraph 1*b* of the tentative Record of Action of the 5/6/54 NSC Meeting, which covers the

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[1] The President's appointment book indicates that the meeting occurred at 9:30 a. m. and that only President Eisenhower, Secretary Dulles, and Cutler were present. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments")

proposed answer to the Eden proposal.[2] The Secretary of State thought the text was correct. Wilson and Radford preferred the draft message to Smith for Eden prepared yesterday by MacArthur and Captain Anderson,[3] and cleared by the JCS, which included in the Five Power Staff Agency Thailand and the Philippines. Radford thinks that the Agency (which has hitherto not been disclosed in SEA) has really completed its military planning; that if it is enlarged by top level personnel, its actions will be necessarily open to the world; that therefore some Southeast Asian countries should be included in it, and he fears Eden's proposal as an intended delaying action.

The President approved the text of paragraph 1*b*, but suggested that Smith's reply to Eden's proposal should make clear the following:

> 1. Five Power Staff Agency, alone or with other nations, is not to the United States a satisfactory substitute for a broad political coalition which will include the Southeast Asian countries which are to be defended.
> 2. Five Power Staff Agency examination is acceptable to see how these nations can give military aid to the Southeast Asian countries in their cooperative defense effort.
> 3. The United States will not agree to a "white man's party" to determine the problems of the Southeast Asian nations.

I was instructed to advise Wilson and Radford of the above, and have done so.[4]

2. The President went over the draft of the speech which Dulles is going to make tonight,[5] making quite a few suggestions and changes in text. He thought additionally the speech should include some easy to understand slogans, such as "The US will never start a war", "The US will not go to war without Congressional authority", "The US, as always, is trying to organize cooperative efforts to sustain the peace".

3. With reference to the cease-fire proposal transmitted by Bidault to the French Cabinet,[2] I read the following, as views principally of military members of the Planning Board, expressed in their yesterday afternoon meeting:

1. US should not support the Bidault proposal.
2. Reasons for this position:
    - *a.* the mere proposal of the cease-fire at the Geneva Conference would destroy the will to fight of French forces and make fence-sitters jump to Vietminh side.

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[2] See memorandum of discussion at the 195th Meeting of the National Security Council, May 6, p. 1481.

[3] The draft message has not been identified.

[4] For memorandum from Cutler to Secretary Wilson and Admiral Radford, May 7, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, p. 435.

[5] On the evening of May 7, Secretary Dulles addressed the nation over radio and television on "The Issues at Geneva." For the text of the speech, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 17, 1954, pp. 739–744.

b. the Communists would evade covertly cease-fire controls.

3. The US should (as a last act to save IndoChina) propose to France that if the following 5 conditions are met, the US will go to Congress for authority to intervene with combat forces:

a. grant of genuine freedom for Associated States
b. US take major responsibility for training indigenous forces
c. US share responsibility for military planning
d. French forces to stay in the fight and no requirement of replacement by US forces.
(*e.* Action under UN auspices?)

This offer to be made known simultaneously to the other members of the proposed regional grouping (UK, Australia, NZ, Thailand, Associated States, Philippines) in order to enlist their participation.

I then summarized possible objections to making the above proposal to the French:

a. No French Government is now competent to act in a lasting way.
b. There is no indication France wants to "internationalize" the conflict.
c. The US proposal would be made without the prior assurance of a regional grouping of SEA States, a precondition of Congress; although this point might be added as another condition to the proposal.
d. US would be "bailing out colonial France" in the eyes of the world.
e. US cannot undertake *alone* to save every situation of trouble.

I concluded that some PB members felt that it had never been made clear to the French that the US was willing to ask for Congressional authority, if certain fundamental preconditions were met; that these matters had only been hinted at, and that the record of history should be clear as to the US position. Dulles was interested to know the President's views, because he is talking with Ambassador Bonnet this afternoon.[6] He indicated that he would mention these matters to Bonnet, perhaps making a more broad hint than heretofore. He would not circulate any formal paper to Bonnet, or to anyone else.

The President referred to the proposition advanced by Governor Stassen at the April 29 Council Meeting[7] as not having been thoroughly thought out. He said that he had been trying to get France to "internationalize" matters for a long time, and they are not willing to do so. If it were thought advisable at this time to point out to the French the essential pre-conditions to the US asking for Congressional authority to intervene, then it should also be made clear to the French as an additional precondition that the US would never intervene alone, that there must be an invitation by the indigenous people, and that there must be some kind of regional and collective action.

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[6] No record of a Dulles-Bonnet meeting on May 7 has been found in Department of State files; for the Secretary's memorandum of his conversation with Ambassador Bonnet on May 8, see p. 1516.

[7] For the memorandum of discussion at the 194th NSC Meeting, Apr. 29, see p. 1431.

I understand that Dulles will decide the extent to which he cares to follow this line with Ambassador Bonnet. This discussion may afford Dulles guidance in replying to Smith's request about a US alternative to support the Bidault proposal, but there really was no decision as to the US attitude toward the cease-fire proposal itself.

751G.00/5–754 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL NIACT

SAIGON, May 7, 1954—9 p. m.
[Received 10:48 a. m.]

2274. Sent Paris niact 783, Geneva niact 64, Tokyo niact 94, Manila niact 239, Singapore niact 76, Bangkok niact 159, Hong Kong niact 67, London niact 48. DeJean informed me at 2030 hours local time that central redoubt of Dien Bien Phu has fallen. There is no capitulation and fighting continues on basis of individual action. "Isabelle" continues to hold out. DeCastries as of 1630 when he made his last report was still alive and fighting.

DeJean said Press would not be informed until tomorrow morning. I asked if he or Navarre contemplated issuing an order of the day. He said it was under study.

I requested DeJean officially to inform Commander-in-Chief that I saluted the gallantry of DeCastries and his men at Dien Bien Phu.

MCCLINTOCK

State–JCS meetings, lot 61 D 417

Substance of Discussions of State–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting at the Pentagon Building, May 7, 1954, 11:30 a. m.[1]

TOP SECRET

[Here follows a list of those present (28).]

1. *Evacuation Plans for Indochina*

Mr. Murphy opened the meeting by asking the JCS to inform the Department whether Defense had made plans for removing French military and civilian nationals from Tonkin and, if so, (*a*) whether these plans are current and (*b*) whether in the opinion of the JCS it is feasible to coordinate plans for evacuation of the French with plans for evacuation of Americans. Mr. Murphy added that if such coordination were approved, the State Department would appreciate information as to the Defense agency which it should consult in order to effect such coordination.

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[1] This State Department draft was not cleared with the participants.

Admiral Radford said that CINCPAC has the responsibility for planning, with the French, military evacuation from Indochina. That portion of evacuation plans dealing with the evacuation of French military and civilians, the Admiral continued, was under a general, enlarged plan developed at the request of French Prime Minister Pleven in the fall of 1950. As a result of this request, CINCPAC in January 1951 was ordered to discuss the question with the French in Indochina. The plan took a year to prepare, was on a large scale, and involved an amphibious operation of considerable magnitude.

Admiral Carney pointed out that the larger evacuation plan involved some 80,000 French regulars, 40,000 irregulars and some 10,000 selected civilians. Its success would depend on the French ability to undertake a reasonably orderly military retreat, since it would take from six weeks to two months to mount the requisite logistical support.

Admiral Radford again referred to his conversation with General de Lattre de Tassigny some two years ago in which the General stated that it would be impossible to evacuate because civilians would pose an insuperable difficulty. The Admiral added that if there were strong native resistance to evacuation, there would obviously be a need for U.S. protective forces to safeguard the ships lying offshore. This was another example of the magnitude of the operation.

Mr. Murphy noted that this aspect of the problem was primarily a French responsibility. He recapitulated that, as he understood it, this larger plan was as current as possible. The JCS agreed. (At this juncture, 11:55 a.m., a ticker was brought in and handed to Admiral Radford, who read aloud that Dien Bien Phu had fallen.) Summing up, Admiral Radford suggested that the larger evacuation problem was so complicated that it had to be played by ear. If the French were capable of holding a military position and falling back in some sort of order, the Admiral added, such a plan might be feasible; otherwise not.

Discussion then ensued concerning authority for the diversion of U.S. shipping to the area. It was brought out that such authority was not automatic, and that diversion could be implemented only under a proclamation of emergency by the President.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

4. *Request for Information on Status of Various French Requests for Aid to Indochina, and Establishments of Channels for Such Requests.*

Mr. Murphy indicated that the problem of supplying U.S. aid to Indochina had been unnecessarily complicated by the receipt of French requests from civilian French officials, apparently without internal

French coordination. Further, many such requests are received and transmitted through U.S. diplomatic channels rather than through the military. Mr. Murphy recommended that Defense discuss with State the current status of recent French requests contained in telegrams listed in a memorandum,[2] copies of which Mr. Murphy left with the JCS. He also suggested that a firm procedure be established for requests for aid to Indochina and that we inform the French of the procedure in order to avoid further confusion.

Admiral Radford expressed JCS gratitude for the memorandum and indicated that coordination obviously was necessary in a confused situation, particularly now that Dien Bien Phu had fallen.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

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[2] A memorandum on this subject was transmitted by Acting Assistant Secretary Drumright (FE) to Deputy Under Secretary Murphy on May 6, to be forwarded to the Department of Defense. A copy of that memorandum, which is presumably the document under reference here, is in file 751G.00/5–654.

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Gullion"

Memorandum by Edmund A. Gullion[1] to the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 7, 1954.

Subject: US Role in Current Negotiations on Indochina

1. Unless and until the United States decides to intervene in the battle in Indochina, I believe we should shun the active and central role in these negotiations. If there is real hope that the United States would choose a defense line anywhere in Indochina or adjacent to it and would participate in "united action" to man it, this would warrant our taking an active role and urging that the French and Associated States take this or that position, but this still seems questionable.

2. The terms on which Laniel is prepared to negotiate are considerably better than the French might have been expected to put forward. These are, however, only initial terms. Almost surely the French will be brought to accepting something far less; in fact, if Dien Bien Phu falls as it is bound to do, it is probable that it will not be Laniel or Bidault who negotiates. Whether they do or not, French logic will restrain them from exacting fantastic concessions from an adversary who is victorious.

3. At some stage in the game, the settlement which emerges will be most disadvantageous to the loyal inhabitants of the Associated States who have collaborated with us. The French terms contain the germ

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[1] Member of the Policy Planning Staff.

of a territorial settlement, however much the French deny that they contemplate a partition arrangement. It is bad enough that we should be signatories to the carving up of one more Asian ally without our appearing as the moving force of a capitulation which will "live in infamy" in Asia.

4. In their chagrined and rudderless condition, the French might all too easily allow us to take the initiative on proposals. Then, French opinion as well as Asian could point in the future to a US responsibility.

5. Obviously, we would do what we can to persuade the French not to fall too far below their initial bargaining position, but what we can do is obviously very little until we are willing to take responsibility and risks.

6. I think some sense of this position should inform the instructions to our Delegation. In the negotiations, it seems to me, unless unforeseen opportunities develop, we should confine ourselves to registering an opinion against extreme concessions by the French at the same time as we approve and applaud any signs of backbone on their part. If we can at the same time take some action in Europe which would demonstrate our sympathy and support, so much the better. And if a "pact" is really in the cards we could use the negotiations as a holding operation while it shapes up.

Editorial Note

At 6 p. m., May 7, 1954, Paris time, Ambassador Dillon delivered the following message from President Eisenhower to French President Coty.

"My dear President Coty

"The entire free world has been inspired by the heroism and stamina displayed by the gallant garrison at Dien Bien Phu. Their devotion and the quality of their resistance have been so great that that battle will forever stand as a symbol of the free world's determination to resist dictatorial aggression and to sustain its right of self-determination and its dedication to the dignity of the human being. France has in the past suffered temporary defeats, but always she has triumphed in the end to continue as one of the world's leaders in all things that tend to bring greater richness to the lives of men. Those who fought and died and suffered at Dien Bien Phu should know that no sacrifice of theirs has been in vain; that the free world will remain faithful to the causes for which they have so nobly fought.

"With expressions of my personal regard, Dwight D. Eisenhower" (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, page 463)

The letter was released by the White House on May 7. For President Coty's reply, released May 13, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, page 463*n*.

President Eisenhower also transmitted a similar message to Bao Dai, the Chief of State of Vietnam, who was at Paris, on May 7; for text, see *ibid.*, page 464. For the reply by Bao Dai, released May 13, see *ibid.*, page 464*n*.

The text of the message from President Eisenhower to President Coty was transmitted to Ambassador Dillon in telegram 3946 to Paris, May 4, for delivery in the event of the fall of Dien Bien Phu. (751G.00/5–454) In telegram 4266 from Paris, May 7, Ambassador Dillon reported that he had delivered the letter to the Elysée at 6 p. m. The message was passed immediately to President Coty and read in the emergency Cabinet meeting then in session. (751G.00/5–754) The letter for Bao Dai was transmitted to Paris in telegram 3979, May 7. (751G.00/5–754) In telegram 4272 from Paris, May 8, Dillon reported delivery of the message that morning. (751G.00/5–854)

Regarding the background of President Eisenhower's letter to President Coty, see telegram Tedul 7 to Paris, April 24, and telegram Dulte 17 from Paris, April 24, pages 1383 and 1394.

751G.00/5–754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, May 7, 1954—5 p. m.

[Received 7:22 p. m.]

4258. Repeated information Geneva 190, Saigon 503. Embassy wishes point out that near unanimity of Assembly opinion manifested May 4 and 6[1] on desirability concluding negotiated settlement Indochina conflict at Geneva underscores Embassy's conclusion as result Assembly debate Indochina March 5 and 9. It will be recalled re latter that Embassy stated that desirability reaching negotiated settlement Indochina conflict was not at issue, the fundamental division taking place on question whether try reach settlement with Viet Minh immediately or first wait and see whether a settlement could be reached within Geneva framework (Embassy despatch 2398, March 18).[2] As indicated yesterday, latter view continues prevail. However, as in March, government's victory of yesterday was again clearly subject implicit caveat: let government beware if settlement not reached within Geneva context. As consequence, Embassy feels its conclusion March 9 should be reiterated with emphasis, i.e., if government fails find solution Geneva along lines indicated by Laniel March 5, French Government will then be faced by almost insurmountable pressure to reach immediate settlement with Viet Minh on best terms obtainable (and presumably on considerably less than Laniel's March 5 conditions). Embassy recognizes this in contrast view expressed Department's IE 63 of March 26 [3] to effect that impact on France of a failure at Geneva will not be serious and will not notably diminish will of France to continue war (to which reference made Embassy despatch 2563, April 8).[4]

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[1] For the record of the debate on Indochina in the National Assembly on May 4 and 6, culminating in a vote of confidence for the Laniel government on a motion to postpone discussion of the subject until after the Geneva Conference (311 to 262 with about 50 abstentions), see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats*, pp. 2092–2100 and 2144–2155.

[2] See footnote 1, p. 1108.

On balance, in absence alteration basic character Indochina war, Embassy of opinion that area maneuverability present French Government (and in turn its delegation Geneva) as regards Indochina rapidly narrowing and that domestic pressures particularly evident France since advent Geneva conference may soon force whatever French Government in power to accept a settlement with Viet Minh on basis most palatable face-saving formula and without regard longer term implications. This seems indicated since few in France currently appear disposed continue Indochina war along present lines, only remaining alternate in their view to achieving settlement on best terms obtainable.

DILLON

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[3] Intelligence Estimate IE-63, "Probable French Position on Indochina at Geneva," Mar. 26, 1954, is not printed. (INR files, lot 58 D 528)

[4] See footnote 3, p. 1295.

751G.11/5-754: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, May 7, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received May 8—2:58 a. m.]

2260. Repeated information Paris 777, Geneva 62, Hanoi unnumbered. Noforn. French expert Vietnamese Ministry of Interior has provided Embassy with following figures on Bao Dai's income: 5 million piasters a month from national budget; 4 million from South Vietnam budget; 2 million from "secret funds"; and 50,000 piasters a day from "Grande Monde" gambling concession granted Binh Xuyen. This adds up to 12.5 million piasters a month or 150 million piasters a year, which equals approximately 4.3 million US dollars at official rate of 35 piasters to US dollar. Since this is official, overt revenue, Bao Dai may change it into French francs through Office des Changes at legal rate.

Above figures do not include vast income derived from percentage of commercial enterprises run by numerous royal family, "triaute" gained through judicious appointments to foreign posts, or, for example, prerequisites such as yacht paid for by French Government, according French expert. Latter estimates Bao Dai's total revenue at equivalent of 7 or 8 million US dollars at official rate of 35 piasters to US dollar, or 5 to 6 million US dollars, if allowance is made for fact income over US 4.3 million dollars would have to be exchanged at black-market rate.

Vietnamese source outside government claims Bao Dai is permitted legally change into French francs through Office des Changes 10 million piasters a month for himself, 2.5 million for Empress Nam Phuong, and one million for children. This comes to 162 million piasters a year, or US dollars 4.6 million, a sum even greater than official income listed paragraph one. Same source also insists French Government continues secretly to give Bao Dai civil list, amounting to something like 15 million piasters a year, granted him when Emperor former Annam protectorate. We recall in this connection final sentence second paragraph Embtel 2188, repeated Paris 747.[1]

McClintock

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[1] Dated May 3, p. 1460.

751G.00/5–854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 8, 1954—11 a. m.
[Received 6:58 a. m.]

4267. Repeated niact Geneva 195. For Secretary from Dillon. Since US Government was unable to respond to French request for military assistance to save Dien Bien Phu, it is now essential to our position here that we give full support to French in the only course now available, namely, the negotiation of best possible settlement at Geneva. This means that we must be prepared to associate ourselves fully with settlement. Any other course of action on our part will appear utterly illogical to all Frenchmen, will seriously affect our already damaged prestige and can be expected to have adverse repercussions on our NATO and EDC position as far as France is concerned.

This recommendation naturally subject to review if Laniel government should be replaced by a peace at any price government.

Dillon

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 196th Meeting of the National Security Council, Saturday, May 8, 1954, 8 a.m.[1]

[Extract]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

The following were present at the 196th Meeting of the Council: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Acting Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were Mr. Tuttle for the Secretary of the Treasury; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; Robert R. Bowie, Department of State; the White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

1. *Report of the Director of Central Intelligence*

The Director of Central Intelligence commented on the initial reports on the fall of Dien Bien Phu. The Vietminh radio claims to have taken prisoner only 17 companies, three to four thousand men. General de Castries is probably a prisoner of war. The garrison of strong point Isabelle was pretty well slaughtered in a final attempt to break out. The Peiping radio has claimed large casualties for the French Union forces.

The immediate danger now is in the Tonkin Delta. There has been a reappraisal of the time interval which the Vietminh would need to get their forces from Dien Bien Phu to the Tonkin Delta area. Mr. Dulles estimated that with 500 trucks the Vietminh should be able to effect this operation in two or three weeks. At the present time the French Union forces in the Delta number 192,000, as against 76,000 regular Vietminh forces. The situation, however, could become acute sooner than anticipated, and to make matters worse, the French forces in the Delta are all enclosed in fixed strong points. They have little mobility.

The President commented that if the native population had any friendly sentiments toward the French, the French forces would not feel themselves compelled to stay within the strong points. Obviously the native population was still far from won over. It was heartbreaking that they showed no inclination to be saved from Communist aggression.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on May 10.

Admiral Radford said that in part the apathy and hostility of the population resulted from fear of the ruthlessness of the Vietminh. The French had not yet dared to take the necessary measures to control this ruthlessness. There were some seven million people living in the Delta area, and only the cities were securely in the hands of the French.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral report by the Director of Central Intelligence on the situation in Indochina, with particular reference to the loss of Dien Bien Phu and the situation within the Tonkin Delta.

2. *Position of the United States With Respect to the French Proposal for Negotiating an Armistice in Indochina*

Mr. Cutler recommended to the Council that it divide the business for this morning's meeting into three parts. First, discussion of the French proposal for a cease-fire. On this subject Mr. Cutler read Secretary Smith's summary of the Bidault proposal. Thereafter, Secretary Dulles handed him the actual text of the Bidault proposal, just received in State, which Mr. Cutler in turn read to the Council.[2] He then pointed out that according to press reports the U.S. and U.K. delegations at Geneva had agreed to support the Bidault proposal, despite the fact that the National Security Council was now sitting down to discuss this problem. Mr. Cutler also called attention to the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had, through the Secretary of Defense, presented their views as to the so-called Bidault proposal. The action paragraph in this JCS report (paragraph 7) had been revised by the President.[3] In summary, as revised, the paragraph urged against U.S. agreement to support any cease-fire in advance of a political settlement and adequate controls, and called on the United States to continue aid to the French Union forces and also to seek to create a regional grouping to protect Southeast Asia. Mr. Cutler then asked Secretary Dulles to speak.

Secretary Dulles said he thought it meaningless for the United States to take the position that there could be no cease-fire in Indochina in advance of a political settlement. There is no satisfactory political settlement anywhere in sight. Any kind of coalition government is out. Accordingly, if we take such a position we would be asking the French to do the opposite of what we ourselves had done in Korea, and the French would rightly resent it. On the other hand, if we want to say no cease-fire in advance of a suitable armistice agreement—that made better sense.

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[2] For the French proposals presented at the Geneva Conference on May 8, see telegram Secto 143, May 8, vol. XVI, p. 730.

[3] For the report by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, submitted to the Secretary of Defense on May 7, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pp. 430–434. That published text bears handwritten notes purporting to indicate the changes made by the President.

The President stated his agreement with the position taken by Secretary Dulles, and Mr. Cutler pointed out that the position recommended by Secretary Dulles comported with his speech of the previous evening.[4]

Secretary Dulles then read to the Council cables which had just come in from Admiral Davis at Geneva,[5] and Mr. Cutler suggested a revision of paragraph 7 to meet the points raised by Secretary Dulles in favor of seeking an armistice with an acceptable international guaranty of controls. A considerable interval was devoted by the Council to drafting the revision of paragraph 7. The President was anxious to see to it that reference was made to the Vietnamese and the Bao Dai government as well as to the French, since otherwise we might seem to be disposing of areas and peoples without consulting them. The President summed up his position on this point by saying that in effect we were urging the French and the Associated States not to stop fighting until they had gotten a satisfactory armistice agreement.

Admiral Radford made the point that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were fearful that if the French proposed negotiations looking to an armistice, the Communists would come back with a proposal for an immediate cease-fire and that the French would soon feel obliged to accept it.

Mr. Cutler inquired as to the wisdom of including reference to accelerating the complete independence of the Associated States. This point, Admiral Radford thought, should be handled separately. We should consider, he advised, putting pressure on the French to secure the independence of the Associated States, and we also ought to put pressure on Bao Dai to go home and take charge of his responsibilities. Secretary Dulles suggested that this matter could best be taken up in the discussion of the next point on the agenda.

The Vice President said he was concerned over the possibility of a situation in which the French would wish to press for an armistice while the Associated States were opposed to this course of action. In this contingency the United States might find itself involved in support of the French against the Associated States. The President, however, said he believed that we had covered ourselves by linking the

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[4] See footnote 5, p. 1496.

[5] By memorandum of May 8, Jeffrey Kitchen, Deputy Director of the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State, transmitted two telegrams of that date to Secretary Dulles for his use at this meeting: telegram 4267 from Paris (*supra*), and Defense telegram Gento 12 from Geneva containing the comments of Admiral Davis and Under Secretary Smith on the JCS views on the French proposal. In Gento 12, Admiral Davis stated the following: "We feel that there is greater distinction between cease fire and armistice negots than now apparent in Para 7. Broadly speaking, cease fire is unconditional and armistice is conditional. We hope French can be persuaded not to propose cease fire. We do not believe they can be persuaded not to propose an armistice. Cease fire unquestionably wld be disastrous. Armistice proposal wld at least gain potentially valuable time." (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 311)

French and the Associated States together in the course of this statement in paragraph 7. If the French and the Associated States split up, we could choose which to support. In any event, we could not go into Indochina unless the Associated States invited us.

In subsequent discussion Secretary Dulles expressed the opinion that on balance it was perhaps desirable for the time being to omit anything in the statement with respect to the United States bringing pressure on France to grant complete independence to the Associated States. In their present extremity the French might resent any renewal of U.S. pressure to this end. It was agreed to omit this point.

Admiral Radford then suggested revisions in the language to take care of the point that the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not believe in the possibility of the Communists actually agreeing to or abiding by any system of international controls for an armistice.

Secretary Dulles said that he doubted the wisdom of tying continuation of U.S. military aid to the French Union forces to the willingness of these French Union forces to oppose the Vietminh "with all means at their disposal". In point of fact, the degree of resistance by the French Union forces might not measure up to our own standard and definition of "all means at their disposal". Secretary Dulles went on to suggest that we avoid becoming so concentrated on what was happening in Indochina that we forget about EDC. There was no point in slapping the French in the face and losing out on EDC.

Mr. Cutler then inquired as to the desirability of Council action with respect to discussing with the French the pre-conditions which we insisted the French must meet before there could be any possibility of U.S. intervention, and which had been discussed at some length at the Council meeting on Thursday, May 6.[6]

Secretary Dulles expressed the opinion that it would be undesirable to set down these conditions on paper, but that if the Council agreed, he would undertake to make clear to the French that any time they were prepared to discuss these conditions we would be ready. He added that he had actually hinted at this in his speech last night by virtue of the analogy he had drawn with Korea.

The Vice President felt that the inclusion of the willingness to discuss conditions for U.S. intervention was of the utmost importance, since otherwise the whole emphasis of the statement would be in the direction of negotiations with the Communists. If the fall of Dien Bien Phu actually stiffens the resistance of the French Union forces, the French should know that there is at least an alternative to a course of action involving negotiation. This was true even if we did not spell it out.

The President expressed agreement with the positions taken by the

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[6] For the memorandum of discussion at the 195th Meeting of the National Security Council, May 6, see p. 1481.

Secretary of State and the Vice President, but said that the best way to handle the conditions for intervention would be for Secretary Dulles to talk with Ambassador Bonnet. If it seemed desirable for Under Secretary Smith to raise this issue of conditions of intervention with the French at Geneva, there would be ample time to get this information to Secretary Smith.

The Vice President concluded the discussion of this point by saying that he had emphasized it as a result of his knowledge of the much stronger position that De Jean was taking in opposition to the idea of negotiations for an armistice at Geneva.

The National Security Council:[7]

a. Agreed that the following United States position be communicated to the U.S. delegation at the Geneva Conference:

> "The United States will not associate itself with any proposal from any source directed toward a cease-fire in advance of an acceptable armistice agreement, including international controls. The United States could concur in the initiation of negotiations for such an armistice agreement. During the course of such negotiations, the French and the Associated States should continue to oppose the forces of the Viet Minh with all the means at their disposal. In the meantime, as a means of strengthening the hands of the French and the Associated States during the course of such negotiations, the United States will continue its program of aid and its efforts to organize and promptly activate a Southeast Asian regional grouping for the purpose of preventing further expansion of Communist power in Southeast Asia."[8]

b. Noted that the Secretary of State will indicate to the French Government that the United States is willing to discuss at any time with France the conditions under which the Indochina conflict might be internationalized.

Note: The above action, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State for appropriate action.

3. *Position of the United States Regarding the Provision of Military Aid to Indochina in the Event of a Cease-Fire*

After Admiral Radford had explained the position taken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in favor of curtailing immediately delivery of additional military assistance to Indochina in the event that the French agreed to a cease-fire,[9] Secretary Dulles stated that he had concurred with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in this matter. Mr. Cutler inquired if there was any other comment. Secretary Dulles said that another thought that worried him was how we might recapture the matériel we had already sent to Indochina if there were a cease-fire. Admiral Radford outlined some of the problems and difficulties attending the recapture of this matériel. Not least of all, he said, was the fact that legally this matériel belonged to the French Union forces.

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[7] Points *a* and *b* below constituted NSC Action No. 1110, May 8, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

[8] This statement was transmitted to the U.S. Delegation at Geneva as telegram Tedul 43, May 8. For text of Tedul 43, see vol. xvi, p. 731.

[9] See memorandum by Secretary of Defense Wilson to Executive Secretary Lay, May 6, and its annex, p. 1493.

The President queried whether Admiral Radford's latter point was correct. Secretary Dulles commented that if the legal title to the matériel was obscure, we should at least inform the French that we do not propose to send them any more matériel without a promise to return it to us in the event of a cease-fire. He was inclined to think, however, that in law we had a right to recapture the matériel which we had sent to Indochina, though admittedly this would be a difficult task physically to carry out.

General Ridgway stated that the legal advisers to the Department of the Army supported completely the views of the Secretary of State. We had every legal right to reclaim this matériel, although General Ridgway readily agreed that it would be extremely difficult to lay hands upon it.

Mr. Cutler then raised the point that if it became known to the French that we would immediately stop sending them military assistance in the event of a cease-fire, this knowledge might have very damaging repercussions on French morale and the French attitude toward the United States. It would also look bad, thought Mr. Cutler, if we tried to pull out our matériel from Indochina at the very time when we are trying to create a regional grouping for the protection of Southeast Asia.

The President stated very flatly that if the Communists were allowed to secure an armistice at Geneva they would presently secure control of the entire area.

There were then several comments to the effect that everything possible must be done to prevent any U.S. matériel from falling into the hands of the Vietminh. The President agreed, and said that if worse came to worst, every effort should be made to destroy such matériel. Admiral Radford agreed that a plan should be worked out with a view to accomplishing this objective. There was a consensus that the first job was for the Department of Defense to work out a program, after which the President suggested that Secretary Smith notify the French that our military people would like to confer with their military people on how to solve this problem. Above all, said the President, we should avoid getting into a new row with the French. The thing to do was for our military staff people to start quietly to negotiate with the French. We most emphatically didn't want to lose our matériel or let it fall into Communist hands.

Admiral Radford stated his belief that destruction of the stores would probably be the only feasible course of action, since the situation in the ports and other considerations would make it almost impossible to bring back any significant amount of matériel.

Secretary Wilson suggested the deletion from the statement of the reference to continued shipment of spare parts and maintenance material, with which the President concurred. It was also agreed that this agreed statement of policy would not be sent at this time to the U.S. delegation at Geneva, but should be handled without publicity in Washington.

The National Security Council: [10]

Discussed the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the subject, and adopted a statement of policy with respect thereto.

Note: The statement of policy, as adopted and approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of Defense for guidance and appropriate action, and to the Secretary of State and the Director, Foreign Operations Administration, for information.[11]

4. *Position of the United States With Respect to the British Proposal for a Five-Power Examination of the Situation in Indochina and Southeast Asia* [12]

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[10] The decision which follows constituted NSC Action No. 1111, May 8, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

[11] A memorandum from J. S. Cottman of the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State to William Galloway of the office of the Counselor, May 13, is filed with NSC Action No. 1111. The memorandum read as follows:

"Cited below for action is the statement of policy which was discussed and adopted by the NSC at its Council meeting on May 8, with respect to 'Position of U.S. re the Provision of Military Aid to Indochina in the Event of a Cease-Fire' with reference to (NSC Action No. 1111):

'In the event of a cease-fire in Indochina in advance of an acceptable armistice agreement, including international controls, the shipment of military end-items under US MDAP provided under the "Agreement for Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina between the United States of America and Cambodia, France, Laos, and Viet-nam" will immediately be suspended. In such event, the entire question of US aid to Indochina will be re-examined in the light of circumstances then existing. The US also assumes that, in such event, military end-items previously delivered in Indochina by the US will be recovered or destroyed to the maximum practicable extent.

'Accordingly, the above statement of policy, as approved by the President, is transmitted herewith to the Secretary of Defense for guidance and appropriate action, and to the Secretary of State and the Director, Foreign Operations Administration for information.'

"It is requested that special security precautions be observed in the handling of the above statement of policy and that access to it be very strictly limited on an absolute need-to-know basis." (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

[12] For the record of this discussion, see volume XII.

751G.00/5–854: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 8, 1954—9 a. m.

2276. Repeated information Paris 785, Geneva 65, London 49. I discussed French position on Indochina phase of Geneva Conference as set out Secto 106, repeated Paris 201, Saigon 33 from Geneva [1] with De Jean this morning, making it clear, however, that this was an informal position which had not yet been adopted by French Government. De Jean felt that Bidault's outline was highly satisfactory and that it indicated acceptance of advice he has been urging from here, particularly in requirement for armistice to spell out effective military aid administrative controls. He feels hopeful that his recommendations, and not Navarre's demand for an immediate cease-fire will prevail in councils of French Government.

De Jean said, however, it was most important that Communist side realize that there were effective guarantees and that there would be retaliation if cease-fire and armistice were violated. He felt it essential therefore that powers at Geneva formulate a guarantee and of course, had in mind principally position of US in this regard.

Should Geneva Conference not arrive at armistice and should war continue past October when next campaigning season will begin, De Jean felt that it would be clearly impossible for French and Vietnamese forces unaided to continue the fight, as by that time Viet Minh would have regrouped and would undoubtedly be strengthened by continuing supply from China. In this case he thought internationalization of war on much larger scale would be only alternative to capitulation.

McClintock

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[1] For text of telegram Secto 106 from Geneva, May 5, see vol. xvi, p. 694.

751G.00/5–854

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Bonbright) [1]

TOP SECRET [Washington,] May 8, 1954.

Subject: Indochina Situation

Participants: Mr. Munro, New Zealand Ambassador
Mr. Laking, New Zealand Minister
Secretary of State
Mr. Murphy, Acting Under Secretary
Mr. Bonbright—EUR

The Ambassador began by expressing the hope that the Secretary would continue as in the past to speak to him with complete candor concerning what we thought of the attitude of the New Zealand government as well as what we have in mind in the way of future actions to deal with the situation in Southeast Asia. The Secretary stated that the speech which he gave last night[2]—which the Ambassador said he had heard—gave perhaps the clearest picture of our present thinking. It had been discussed with our Defense people and had the approval of the President.

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[1] This meeting was summarized in telegram 155 to Wellington (Tosec 121 to Geneva), May 10; for text, see volume xii. A related conversation occurred on May 7 when Assistant Secretary Merchant discussed Indochina and regional defense arrangements for Southeast Asia with Minister F. J. Blakeney of the Australian Embassy and Minister G. R. Laking of the New Zealand Embassy. The memorandum of that conversation is in file 751G.00/5–754.

The Secretary went on to say that a few days ago we had received suggestions from Mr. Eden, with which the Ambassador was familiar. Speaking frankly, we were not entirely happy about the form of these suggestions. Our feeling was that if action was limited to military discussions within the framework of the existing Five-Power Staff Agency (US, UK, France, New Zealand and Australia) this would have too "Western" a flavor. The exclusion of any Asians would have bad repercussions particularly in Vietnam where they would consider that they were being abandoned. We had no objection to five-power military discussions as such and we were prepared to take part in such discussions if our other partners so desired although we would prefer to have them take place in Washington rather than in Singapore. But in addition we believed that we should continue to plan and exchange views with regard to a broader political association.

The Secretary then said that there was another slight difference between us and the UK. We are prepared and desire to talk during the present period with representatives of the Associated States in order to show them that we are not abandoning them. The United Kingdom on the other hand feared that such discussions would have undesirable implications and that they might suggest the possibility of involvement in the Indochina war. In short we thought the five-power military talks would be fine but this should not stop the continuation of our exploratory talks with Thailand, the Philippines and the three Associated States. It was also desirable to include Burma and to keep the Indonesians informed so as to ensure at least their benevolent neutrality.

The Secretary then said we should now be making concrete studies in order to see what all of us might agree on together. Should we have an organization like NATO or should the arrangement be more informal? What countries should be included in it? He felt that if Indochina went down the drain it would be difficult to insulate the rest of the area unless we had plans in advance of what we would do. We intended to work as closely as possible with the British but we would reserve our right to talk with the Associated States for the reasons already given.

The Secretary then said that, as the Ambassador may have gathered from his speech last evening, we do not exclude in our thinking a possible participation in the Indochina war if the proper conditions existed. Mr. Munro interjected that he had so interpreted the Secretary's speech. The Secretary indicated that he had not wanted to say flatly that if "so and so" were done we would come in. He had preferred to advance the suggestion by analogy with the Korean situation. In other words it would have to be on the basis that not only the French but the people of the Associated States would want us in; we would have to take part in helping to train the indigenous forces; the independence question would have to be clarified; the United Nations would have to be drawn into some aspects of the problem, etc. Up to now the French had not been in the mood to think in these terms and in the Secretary's view they would not unless and until they are faced with tough Communist demands. If the Communist conditions at Geneva are humiliating to the French, as we suspect they will be, the French may reconsider their position on internationalization of the conflict. The French are playing a dubious game as indicated by Laniel's statement of yesterday that they have been left alone.[3] The fact was that we had given them practically everything, supported the French franc and poured in equipment. Actually the French had never really asked us to come into the war for the reason that they would not face up to the implications of such a request which would involve a negotiation and relationship similar to that which had existed between us and the United Kingdom when the British burden became more than they could bear in Greece. The French had followed a different line. They had wanted to draw on us for everything but they had not been willing to sit down with us and discuss the situation in terms which would have given us the voice of a partner. Perhaps the French will change when they are faced with harsh reality. If they do we will indicate to them the conditions of our participation. In any event the Secretary said that through his speech last night he wanted the French to know that there were conditions under which we would be prepared to consider participating.

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[2] See footnote 5, p. 1496.

The Ambassador then asked if we had any information or had reached any conclusions concerning the impact on the French and people of the Associated States of the fall of Dien Bien Phu. The Secretary replied that we did not as yet have reports on this.

Mr. Munro inquired whether we had given thought to what areas *must* be held if the situation in Indochina deteriorates rapidly. The Secretary replied that he regarded Thailand as being of the greatest importance and that the Thais should be brought in fully. General

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[3] For the text of Prime Minister Laniel's announcement of the fall of Dien Bien Phu, see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats*, p. 2223 (session of May 7).

Smith had talked to them prior to his departure for Geneva. At present they have about 60,000 troops of pretty good quality. We think that this figure should perhaps be built up to around 90,000.

The Ambassador inquired what we would do if we were not faced with Chinese intervention but were faced with increased efforts at subversion in the area. The Secretary thought that if the Thai government has our military and financial support they are not nearly as vulnerable to this type of attack. They were fully independent and were not a colonial state. Perhaps they had not been too bold in the past in the face of adversity but with our help we thought they could be bolstered. This would be worth doing even if it only resulted in a delaying operation although the Secretary did not want to leave the impression that he thought Thailand would be lost.

The Ambassador then asked if we would support or guarantee a French proposal which would be tantamount to turning over Indochina to the Communists. The Secretary replied that we certainly would not. If such a proposal were made we would maintain our full liberty of action and would encourage and assist such indigenous forces as might remain.

The Ambassador said he was not quite clear whether we contemplated military talks with the Associated States. The Secretary replied that we did not contemplate military talks with them since we did not think they would be worthwhile although military talks with the Thais and the Filipinos would be useful. The only purpose of our talks with the Associated States would be for the purpose of maintaining contact with them and making them feel that we had not written them off.

The Ambassador then referred to the speech which Mr. Webb had made at Geneva yesterday.[4] The Secretary said he had seen accounts of it in the papers but wished to read it in the full text. He asked the Ambassador to invite Mr. Webb down to Washington to have a further talk with him when Mr. Webb passes through this country on his way home from Geneva. The Ambassador said he would be glad to do so and was sure this would be useful.

Finally Mr. Laking said he would like to have clarification on one point: Were we and the British in accord with regard to the five-power military talks. The Secretary said that we were not yet in accord. The matter had been discussed at the National Security Council meeting this morning. We expect to get our views to General Smith today with the thought that he will shortly convey them to Mr. Eden.

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[4] Reference is to the address by T. C. Webb, Minister of External Affairs of New Zealand, at the Eighth Plenary Session on Korea, May 7; see telegram Secto 138, May 7, vol. xvi, p. 223.

Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, lot 64 D 199

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, May 8, 1954—6 p. m.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, HENRI BONNET

I called on Ambassador Bonnet at his residence, he being indisposed. We spoke of my speech the night before [2] which he commended. I said I assumed that the parallel with Korea had been noted by him and he said that it had. I said that this was as far as I thought it wise to go publicly in indicating what had on many previous occasions been made clear, namely that the United States was prepared to sit down and talk with the French about what the French called "internationalizing" the war and working out a real partnership basis. I said that as far as the immediate present was concerned, I assumed that the French Government would still not want this. However, they might change their mind after the full harshness of probable Communist terms was revealed. Then this might seem to them an alternative worth exploring. I wanted the French to know that such explorations would be acceptable to the United States.

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[1] The text of this memorandum was transmitted to the U.S. Delegation at the Geneva Conference as telegram Tedul 46, May 9; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 742.

[2] See footnote 5, p. 1496.

751G.00/5-854 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 8, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received May 9—6:15 a. m.]

2289. Sent Paris 791, Geneva 68, Hanoi 424, repeated information Tokyo 95, Manila 240, Singapore 77, Bangkok 161, London 51, Hong Kong 68. General O'Daniel and I called on General Navarre this morning to present our official and personal homage to General De Castries and his heroic men at Dien Bien Phu.

Navarre gave us following account of end of battle.

Enemy commenced all-out attack at 9 p. m. May 6 and fighting was continuous thereafter for twenty hours. There was exceedingly heavy artillery barrage and for first time in Indochina war French Union forces were subjected to long-range rocket fire of type case from "Stalin organs". These were undoubtedly of Russian manufacture.

Last contact with De Castries was at 1700 hours yesterday when he reported that Viet Minh were within ten meters of his command post and that he was destroying his radio forthwith. Air reconnaissance yesterday afternoon revealed that sporadic fighting was continuing in and around central redoubt up to 1900 hours last night.

Navarre said that an agreed sortie plan was made operational by command yesterday morning, on hypothesis that as usual enemy would cease hostilities at dawn. However, Viet Minh continued battle with utmost ferocity throughout day with result that it was impossible for De Castries to carry out this sortie which would have been past "Isabelle", joining with two and half battalions in that strong point, entire garrison then seeking to fight its way out of Dien Bien Phu basin in general direction of Muong Sai and Luang Prabang, whence relief column of four battalions would have moved north to meet remnants of garrison. However, plan failed. General O'Daniel suspects that probably since De Castries was receiving orders by voice radio enemy command intercepted orders and thus pressed all-out daylight battle to frustrate sortie. Navarre probably with more exactitude says that decision for final all-out uninterrupted assault was timed to cause downfall of fortress on eve IC phase of Geneva conference.

Navarre said that last night on instructions battalions in "Isabelle" sortied but met with superior resistance and were unable to break out. He had no information as of 1100 hours this morning whether "Isabelle" garrison had returned to its old position to continue a last-ditch fight or whether it was being chopped to pieces outside "Isabelle" with possibility of some survivors straggling south.

At commencement of last assault evening of May 6 there were 1,200 wounded of whom 500 were litter cases. These figures do not, however, include large number, perhaps 1,500 in all, of walking wounded who were still in combat. Navarre estimates that following yesterday's carnage number of severely wounded must be not less than 2,000 and that out of a total garrison of 8,000 men probably four [*forty?*] percent were in some degree wounded. He thought it possible that Communists in a dramatic play for world opinion might now agree to evacuation of wounded. He agreed with our estimate that had Communists played their hand more cleverly at Geneva, delaying final assault on Dien Bien Phu and offering a cease-fire, it would have been impossible in light of French public opinion to resist accepting such an offer.

Navarre was icily calm but obviously a man who had gone through great strain. He said, although Giap's losses had been terrific—latest assault waves of Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu were made up 55 percent of raw recruits—he still have [*has*] capability of bringing his divisions over to Tonkin delta. Navarre, unlike DeJean, did not think that rainy season would stop him since his troops were perfectly capable of going overland on any terrain. However, with rains it would be more difficult for enemy to move his artillery and heavy equipment. This gave opportunity to French Air Force "now that it had little else to do" to attempt interdiction bombing and strafing on route which Giap would be forced to use. Nevertheless, there was a distinct possibility that within one month Viet Minh would be in force in delta and, if Geneva conference still dragged on, decision might be taken to continue all-out war in delta despite difficulties of water and hot weather. If this happened Navarre said it would be beyond means of Franco-Vietnamese forces to prevent a defeat and that only other alternative would have to be internationalization of war.

McClintock

751G.00/5-854 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY

Saigon, May 8, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received May 9—7:27 a. m.]

2290. Sent priority Paris 792, priority Geneva 69, London 52, Hanoi 425. During course of conversation with General Navarre reported Embtel to Department 2289,[1] Commander-in-Chief made a number of comments on political situation both international and national.

Navarre said that he was certain that, following Secretary's statements earlier this year re possibility of using United States power of retaliation and specifically his statement that participation of Chinese experts at Dien Bien Phu was perilously close to Chinese intervention in Indochina war, Communist side had been hesitant for fear United States might in fact come into this conflict militarily. However, following request for United States air intervention at Dien Bien Phu which had been turned down and evident signs of vacillation re United States policy, Communists had been emboldened and had thus decided to wind up Dien Bien Phu forthwith.

If Geneva did not result in an armistice, there was no alternative between defeat and internationalization of war, which meant active military participation by United States. Navarre was certain that France would not find it possible to send necessary additional forces and equipment to carry on struggle alone with Vietnamese.

Meanwhile he was certain that Communist China was prepared to step up its aid to Viet Minh in weapons of all types other than aircraft. Navarre's estimate of situation is that Chinese would only intervene in use of air power if United States itself came in in similar fashion.

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[1] *Supra.*

However, in hope that United States would not thus intervene, Chinese would be loath to send aircraft as they were fearful of United States power of retaliation on Chinese cities.

Navarre said that he intended to be very frank even if he might sound critical. He said that United States policy over several years of encouraging Vietnamese to obtain complete theoretical independence had resulted in a situation where Vietnamese had all benefits of independence but neither know-how nor sense of responsibility to defend their independence. He said Vietnamese Government is a "band of marionettes" with no real national leader and that energies of what leaders had appeared were devoted to promoting factional difference and personal advantage. He said National Army was a rabble despite fact that Vietnamese soldier, as his Viet Minh brother had so effectively proved, could be as good as any other soldier in the world. There was no cadre, professional private armies refused to enter national armed forces and two top leaders, Hinh, Commander-in-Chief, and Quat, Minister of Defense, were at swords-points.

It had not been possible to give adequate training to Vietnamese units because, since war was going on continuously everywhere, units once formed were immediately needed in combat. This was in contrast to practice in Korea where, according to Van Fleet's account, it had been possible to withdraw ROK divisions from the line for rest and retraining.

General Navarre, in discussing problem of making a truly combatworthy Vietnamese army within scant framework of time which is left, said with considerable irony that if war were internationalized, his first official act would be to request that General O'Daniel assume complete responsibility for Vietnamese National Army. He said, "If, however, you do take over this responsibility, you must be able to put the screws to these people. They will not cooperate by themselves and they will have to be made to."

I am certain on basis of my previous conversations with Navarre that his offer to General O'Daniel is genuine but only on condition that United States come into this war with all arms. By "internationalization" he means only this; not as General O'Daniel is inclined to hope, a form of internationalization whereby United States would assume responsibility for training and leadership of Vietnamese army and French would assume responsibility for continuing military operations, particularly in Delta.[3]

McClintock

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[3] In telegram 2292 from Saigon, May 8, McClintock made the following additional comments. He had not attempted to present a rebuttal to Navarre's criticism of U.S. policy in view of the personal tragedy the General had just experienced in the fall of Dien Bien Phu. McClintock warned, however, that Navarre's version of events underscored the possibility that "we may expect to see renewed and more calculated attempts by French and others to lay blame for their failures on United States." (751G.00/5–854)

751G.00/5–954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, May 9, 1954—4 p. m.

2298. Repeated information Paris 798, Geneva 73. De Jean last night told me that at 5 a. m. on March 15, that is to say only two days after commencement of battle at Dien Bien Phu, Navarre had called him to say that battle would be lost. This speaks eloquently of French commander-in-chief Indochina and underscores his indecisiveness in failing to mount a relief operation for Dien Bien Phu before it was too late.

De Jean said that Navarre plan ceased to be operational last Christmas when Viet Minh punched across to Mekong at Thakhek. Although enemy had no more than 6 or 7 battalions, French General Franchi with 22 battalions had proved impotent to counter this threat.

De Jean said that time had now come to reconsider whole framework of war in Indochina. I told him of my conversation yesterday morning with Navarre (Embtel 2290 repeated Paris 792, Geneva 69)[1] and alternative to defeat would be internationalization of conflict which meant US participation in all arms. I likewise reported to De Jean Navarre's remark to General O'Daniel that if war did become internationalized he would turn over responsibility for Vietnamese national army to O'Daniel.

I said that I was confident that French Government backed by popular feeling after fall of Dien Bien Phu would not simply scuttle and run from responsibilities here no matter how faint-hearted commander-in-chief might be. I thought that between Navarre's black and white alternative of US coming in with ground, naval, and air forces in order to gain dubious privilege of training Vietnamese national army, there was a valid middle ground; namely, that French should assume responsibility with such Vietnamese forces as could be spared for defense of Tonkin Delta and that US training command take over Vietnamese national army and whip it into a truly effective combat force.

De Jean seemed personally inclined to agree. He repeated that now is time for us to sit down and go over problem of future relationships of US, France, and Vietnam to continuation of war in Indochina.

By De Jean's own admission Navarre plan, execution of which was condition precedent to our agreement of September 29, 1953, ceased to be an effective plan last December. US, however, was not notified to that effect nor was US informed that Navarre had given up sponge at Dien Bien Phu only two days after battle began. I think we have ample warrant to call upon French Government to take a new look not only at September 29 agreements but likewise at entire framework of our military, financial, and political relationships to this conflict.

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[1] *Supra.*

McClintock

751G.00/5–954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State [1]

TOP SECRET Saigon, May 9, 1954—3 p. m.

2299. Limit distribution. If recommendation made my telegram 2298 [2] meets with favorable consideration in our government, might it not be a convenient stratagem to invite General Van Fleet to come here at once to make a study of military and training situation and to make recommendations with General O'Daniel as to what profitably could be done.

I have greatest admiration for General O'Daniel's faith, tenacity, and bull-dog courage. I fear, however, he may be over sanguine as to possibilities of making an effective Vietnamese fighting force in six months time. Irrespective of General O'Daniel's abundant military virtues, there are many obstacles in his path. Not least of these is complete apathy of Vietnamese populace coupled with increasing tendency of fence-sitters to go over to enemy, absolute breakdown of mobilization plan, internecine rivalries between few men capable of showing leadership, and lack of leadership from Bao Dai and his Ministers. I do not say the job cannot be done but that we should take a close look at its dimensions before we come in.[3]

McClintock

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[1] The text of this telegram was sent by the Department to Paris as telegram 4026 (repeated to Geneva as Tosec 126), May 11. (751G.00/5–954)

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Telegram 2251 to Saigon (repeated to Paris as 4025 and to Geneva as Tedul 55), May 11, read as follows: "ReEmbtel 2299. We believe Van Fleet's presence Indochina might raise false hopes unless and until we have considered and agreed with French and Associated States re a possible US participation Indochina war, in view his widely known experience in training native troops for effective resistance against Communist forces.

"You should consider Tedul 46 rpt Saigon 2238 Paris 4002 as preliminary answer to Embtel 2298." (751G.00/5–954)

Tedul 46 is identified in footnote 1, p. 1516.

Editorial Note

On May 9, 1954, Brigadier General Charles H. Bonesteel III, Defense Member on the Planning Board of the National Security Council, addressed a memorandum to Charles E. Wilson, the Secretary of Defense, titled "Future U.S. Action Regarding Indo-China." For text, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, page 442.

The General prepared a second memorandum, titled "A Concept for Action with Regard to Indochina," which was submitted to the Planning Board on May 13. For text, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pages 460–461. A copy in the Eisenhower Library bears the handwritten notation "Bonesteel May 11, 1954." (Eisenhower Library, White House Office, "Project 'Clean Up' ")

751G.00/5–1054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY SAIGON, May 10, 1954—noon.
[Received 1:46 a. m.]

2309. Sent priority Paris 802, priority Geneva 75. I asked De Jean this morning if any word has been received as to fate of wounded at Dien Bien Phu. He said there was none, but that French were continuing to parachute both medical supplies and food into ravaged fortress and that these relief planes had not been fired upon. De Jean repeated Navarre's estimate to me that 40 percent of total garrison of 8,000 men must be considered wounded.

Columns of prisoners in groups of 50 were observed moving north from Dien Bien Phu on foot. How many of these were walking wounded is of course not known.

I suggested to De Jean that if Navarre made a renewed appeal to Giap for permission at least to send in medical teams by helicopter, I could not see how Communists could refuse such a request, now that battle was over and there would be absolutely no military advantage to be won by declining. I thought Navarre as Commander-in-Chief had moral obligation to do at least this and to bring out news of fate of wounded.

De Jean said he agreed with this idea and would urge it on Navarre forthwith.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/5–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 10, 1954—1 p. m.
[Received 10:52 a. m.]

4287. Repeated information Saigon 509, niact Geneva 204. Department and Geneva limit distribution. Saigon eyes only Ambassador. Laniel asked me to come to see him at 10 Sunday night.[1] I found him in a strong and courageous mood reminiscent of the conversations I had last summer at the beginning of the negotiations over the Navarre plan and quite in contrast with his mood of the past few weeks. He stated that he plans to take a very firm position in the National Assembly on Tuesday when Indochina problem comes up again. He plans to say that there are decisions of vital military importance to be taken daily in Indochina and equally important decisions to be taken daily at Geneva. If the National Assembly has someone else in mind whom they can put into office promptly to handle these decisions in a better fashion than he can, they should do so, but that if they are not prepared for the immediate reconstitution of a new government (which they are not) they should stop talking about Indochina and let the government get on with its difficult task.

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[1] May 9.

Laniel then expressed considerable concern regarding (1) the prospects at Geneva; and (2) and more important, the military situation in Indochina. He felt that Indochina phase of Geneva conference [2] had got off to a bad start and considered it very likely that in view of the division and weakness among the Western powers, the Communists will not accept the French proposal for a cease-fire with guarantees, but will press for what in effect would be total surrender.

He said it had been made clear to the French delegation by the Communists that they could not have any conversations direct with the Viet Minh at Geneva but must in all cases proceed through the Chinese. This, plus the fact of large scale Chinese intervention at Dien-Bien-Phu, made it clear that the enemy France is facing is not the Viet Minh rebels, but Communist China. Laniel observed that Communist China had fought the whole UN to a standstill in Korea. Obviously France alone was no match for China. The strength with which the French could oppose Chinese propositions at Geneva would have a direct connection with the amount of support they received from the other Western powers, particularly the US. In the final analysis, the only such support, which he felt would have any real effect on the Chinese, would be the direct threat of US military intervention. He very much feared that the Communist side would attempt to drag out the negotiations by interminable procedural debates on such subjects as the admission to the conference of non-existent Communist Governments of Laos and Cambodia until such time as they could gain a military decision in the field.

Laniel then turned to the immediate military problem. He said that the Viet Minh had announced that they would not cease operations this year during the monsoon. Their next objective, after Dien-Bien-Phu, would in all probability be Hanoi. Under ordinary circumstances it should take the Viet Minh approximately a month to move their troops from Dien-Bien-Phu to the Hanoi area. However, it might be possible to reduce this period to two or three weeks if the Viet Minh made an all-out effort. He also feared that in view of the success which the Chinese have had with their military intervention at Dien-Bien-Phu, they would not now hesitate to intervene further with supplies and even with additional personnel, to the extent necessary to gain a knockout victory at Hanoi.

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[2] The Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference began on May 8.

It therefore was vitally important, as a first order of business, for the French to decide how to regroup their forces in Indochina so as best to protect the expeditionary corps. Laniel said that he would much prefer to take these military decisions with the aid of competent US military advice, rather than to take them by himself. He also said that he would have to know, in connection with making his decisions, what, if any, military action the US might be prepared to take in Indochina and under what, if any, circumstances. If there was no possibility of US military help at any point, the regroupment of forces would have to be much more drastic, and the first thing to be done would be the complete evacuation and abandonment to the Viet Minh of the entire territories of Laos and Cambodia. He stated that there were 15 French Union battalions presently in Laos which would have to be redeployed to the Delta or to some area near the sea. In addition, the French-held lines in the Delta would have to be greatly shortened.

As a specific request, Laniel asked that a US General officer, fully familiar with the terrain and conditions in Indochina be sent to Paris immediately to confer with General Ely, Pleven and himself. He said that at least in the first instance, it would be imperative to preserve the utmost secrecy concerning this mission and that the only people who would be informed of it, in addition to the three previously mentioned, would be Bidault and Maurice Schumann. He said that it was impossible to spare General Ely at this time for a trip to Washington, which was the reason for his request that a US officer come to Paris. He emphasized the importance of the US officer being fully up to date and informed regarding the terrain and possibilities in Indochina. In addition to the help which this officer could give, Laniel said that he would also require definite information from me as to what the US Government might be prepared to do in the way of military effort. He emphasized the great need for speed and hoped that he could have an answer in principle very shortly to his request for advice from a US

General. If the answer were favorable, the US General should arrive before the end of the week in order to be fully effective.[3]

DILLON

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[3] In telegram 4294 from Paris, May 10, Ambassador Dillon stated the following: "It has occurred to me that an excellent choice for the general officer Laniel has in mind is General Trapnell who was recently relieved of his duties as Chief of MAAG–Saigon. Reports here as to his ability, tact and technical qualifications while in Indochina were of the highest. He is particularly well-qualified to work with French under the present strained circumstances and therefore recommend Department sponsor his candidacy." (751G.00/5–1054)

Dillon added the following in telegram 4295, also May 10: "Re Saigon's 298 [*798*] sent Department 2293 [p. 1520]. Conversation with Laniel last night reported Embtel 4287 indicates that French here are fully prepared to undertake basic re-study of relationships of US, France and Vietnam as described in reference telegram, provided US is willing to give military assistance should war in Indochina continue." (751G.00/5–1054)

In telegram 2341 from Saigon, May 11, McClintock stated that he thoroughly concurred in the recommendation of Ambassador Dillon as set out in telegram 4287. (751G.00/5–1154)

033.4111/5–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 10, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 1:18 p. m.]

4292. Eyes only Secretary. Re Deptel 4003.[1] Since fall of Dien Bien Phu all leading Frenchmen with whom I have talked have gone out of way to be extremely critical of British and in particular of Churchill, whom they picture as 1954 version of Chamberlain at Munich. This includes Laniel, Maurice Schumann, Rene Mayer, Mrs. Paternotre, Christiaens (Secretary of Air Force), General Fay and others.

French presently feel that there is marked divergence in US and UK policy toward Indochina and that US is endeavoring to persuade British towards concept of united action. The hope that US either will be successful in persuading British or will eventually act without British is a real sustaining force in French governmental circles today.

Churchill and Eden visit would inevitably be looked upon by French as culmination of attempt to reconcile US and British policy in Southeast Asia. As a result French would follow meeting with bated breath to see what progress it made toward laying foundation for "united action." French reaction to meeting would depend entirely on its outcome. If British agreed to proceed with some effective form of united action, French would regard meeting as triumph for US and French points of view and would be most happy about it. If on the other hand, there was no progress toward united action concept and US seemed to accept British point of view, present French inclination to feel that they are being abandoned by their friends in face of the Communist enemy would certainly be strengthened. This would naturally tend to strengthen neutralist thinking here and to weaken forces favoring EDC.

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[1] In telegram 4003 to Paris, May 10, the Department of State reported that British Prime Minister Churchill had suggested that he visit Washington. The Embassy in Paris was asked for an estimate of the French reaction to such a visit. (033.4411/5–1054) For documentation on the Churchill visit of June 1954, see volume VI.

Thus if we cannot move British toward united action, and if we wish to maintain French spirit, it will be most important to clearly indicate that we are not letting British tie our hands. In short I feel French reaction to Churchill visit will depend primarily on results of visit on US policy toward Indochina and secondly on results of visit on UK policy toward Indochina.

DILLON

751G.00/5–1154

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor (MacArthur)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 11, 1954.

Subject: Informal and Unofficial Notes on Meeting at the White House on Indochina, afternoon of May 10, 1954.[1]

Participants: The President
Secretary Dulles
Secretary Wilson
Deputy Secretary of Defense Anderson[2]
Admiral Radford
Mr. Bowie
Mr. MacArthur

At Secretary Dulles' request the meeting was called to consider Paris' telegram 4287[3] which contained a request from Prime Minister

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[1] According to the President's appointment book, this meeting took place at 4:30 p. m. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments")

[2] Robert B. Anderson, Deputy Secretary of Defense since May 3.

[3] For telegram 4287 from Paris, May 10, see p. 1522. Secretary Dulles discussed that telegram with Admiral Radford by telephone at 3 p. m. The Secretary's files contain the following record of that conversation: "The Sec. called and said he has just seen the advance cable from Dillon re his talk with Laniel. He thinks it is of the utmost importance, and will see that the Adm. gets it. For the first time they want to sit down and discuss the military situation, regrouping of troops, etc. It is encouraging that they seem willing to do business with us so we can move and get Congressional support."

The Admiral called back at 4:22 p. m. The record of that conversation read as follows:

"Adm. R. called and said he had the message and is wondering what the next move is. The Sec. said he was just talking with MacArthur and Bowie about it. In a way it is encouraging, and R. agreed and said it is too bad it wasn't done two months ago. The Sec. referred to two requests—they are going over the 'circumstances which'. The big hurdle is should we be willing to act without the British. R. thinks so along with the Sec., but that is political, said the Sec. As far as the military is concerned, R. said it is no help to us. The VP feels we can. The Sec. said he is lunching with the President tomorrow on other matters, and

Laniel: (1) that a U.S. general officer be sent to Paris to advise on the regrouping of French forces in Indochina; (2) a request from Laniel as to the circumstances and conditions under which the U.S. would intervene in the Indochina conflict and what it might be prepared to do.

With respect to (1) above, it was agreed that General Trapnell was the most qualified officer available and that he should be sent to Paris to discuss the redisposition of French forces with Prime Minister Laniel, Defense Minister Pleven and General Ely. There was agreement that such discussions should take place, if the French Assembly supports Laniel in the debate scheduled to begin May 11. Secretary Wilson mentioned that such discussions might imply U.S. obligations or responsibilities and there seemed tacit agreement that General Trapnell's terms of reference make clear that the responsibilities of the U.S. were not engaged and that such discussions would not imply a U.S. commitment. It was also agreed that Ambassador Dillon should handle the political aspects raised in point 2 above but that General Trapnell should, of course, have full knowledge of the U.S. position. The President indicated that it would be appropriate for Ambassador Dillon to be present at discussions which General Trapnell might have in Paris. Admiral Radford said he believed Trapnell was on leave at the moment and would have to be called back to the Pentagon for briefing and consultation with the Chiefs which would probably take at least a couple of days.

The discussions then turned to the conditions under which the U.S. might participate in the Indochina conflict. Secretary Dulles handed the President a piece of paper on which he said he had hastily jotted down, following his telephone conversation with the President, conditions which seemed essential from the U.S. viewpoint. (The original of this paper is attached hereto—Miss Bernau has it.)[4] The President, Secretary Wilson, Secretary Dulles, Mr. Anderson and Admiral Radford then discussed the paper and there was agreement that the points made by the paper were basic conditions which would have to be met.

With respect to the participants in this collective action which the U.S. would join, the President made it quite clear that he would *only* propose U.S. intervention on the basis of collective action. It was agreed that Thailand and the Philippines in addition to the Associated States were essential to indicate Asian participation and that there should be evidence that Australia and New Zealand would also par-

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he will bring this up. R. thinks we should move faster. The Sec. said he will call and try to work something out for this p. m.

"The Sec. called the President, and they will go right over.

"The Sec. called Radford back and he will be over also with Wilson and/or Anderson." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

[4] The note by Secretary Dulles does not accompany the source text. Reference is to Phyllis D. Bernau of the office of the Secretary of State.

ticipate and perhaps eventually the U.K., although that might not be possible initially.

There was fairly detailed discussion with respect to the item which called for French guarantee of complete independence to the Associated States, including an option to withdraw from the French Union. Secretary Dulles said that we were on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, it was essential to eliminate from the minds of the Asians any belief that we were intervening in Indochina in support of colonialism. On the other hand, the truth of the matter was that the Associated States were not in a position to enjoy complete independence. They did not have the trained personnel necessary to administer their respective countries and the leadership was not good. In a sense if the Associated States were turned loose, it would be like putting a baby in a cage of hungry lions. The baby would rapidly be devoured. After some discussion as to whether the French might specify that the Associated States could opt for withdrawal from the French Union either five or ten years after the cessation of hostilities, it was agreed that the exact period of time should not be fixed at this moment. There would, however, prior to action on the part of the U.S. have to be a satisfactory agreement on specific length of such a period and this agreement would have to be entirely satisfactory to the Associated States and could not be the result of French pressure.

The President then said he felt that if the French agreed to the terms, the question of his presentation to the American Congress and people was of great importance. He believed that he should appear before a joint session of Congress, set forth the full circumstances, and seek a Congressional resolution which would enable him to use the armed forces of the U.S. to support the free governments that we recognize in that area. He asked Secretary Dulles to have the State Department start work on a first draft of such a message. He would have to be in a position to indicate that the U.S. was acting in concert with its friends and allies in the area and on the direct and formal invitation of France and the three Associated States. It was also important that he be able to make clear to the Congress that the U.N. was not being by-passed and was involved in the matter. Secretary Dulles pointed out that the question of the timing and procedures involved in the various conditions set forth in this paper would require careful working out but that it should be possible to indicate to the Congress that the basic conditions had been or would be met.

The Secretary also pointed out that thus far we had only a request from Laniel and that the responsibility of the French Government and French Parliament was not engaged by Laniel's request to Dillon. It was important that our action be based on a formal request which had the backing of the French Government and Parliament.

751G.00/4-3054

The Secretary of State to the United States Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) [1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 10, 1954.

DEAR CABOT: I refer to your letter of April 27, 1954 to the President regarding Indochina and the United Nations. As I think you know, I have been very anxious to have this matter, at least in some of its phases, brought before the United Nations, but the French have been violent in their opposition. In view of the role they were playing, it has seemed best not to take action which would intensify the French desire to quit entirely in Indochina.

We are keeping our finger on the pulse of the French situation with a view to possible United Nations action. That was the last thing about which I talked to Bidault on Sunday night, May 2, before leaving Geneva.[2]

At this moment, I am thinking in terms of a peace observation commission for Laos, Cambodia, and perhaps Thailand, rather than a call for troops, which, I fear, would be very difficult to obtain at the present juncture.

Faithfully yours, JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[1] Secretary Dulles transmitted a copy of this letter to President Eisenhower on May 10. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina")

[2] The question of a possible role for the United Nations in Indochina was raised during a discussion between Secretary Dulles and Jean Chauvel of the French Delegation, later joined by Foreign Minister Bidault, at Geneva on the evening of May 2. For MacArthur's memorandum of that conversation, see vol. XVI, p. 667.

751G.00/5-1054: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, May 10, 1954—9 p. m.

4017. Eyes only for Ambassador from Secretary.

1. Reur 4287,[2] Laniel raises two questions: (*a*) Whether we will send general officer to discuss regrouping of French forces in Indochina; and (*b*) under what conditions US might intervene in Indochina. This cable answers question (*a*). Will send answer to (*b*) tomorrow.[3]

2. If Assembly supports Cabinet in Indochina debate starting Tuesday,[4] US will send general officer to Paris for discussion with Laniel, Pleven and Ely as requested. Tentatively expected to be Trapnell. All

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State. Repeated to Geneva as Tedul 53, for the eyes of Under Secretary Smith only.

[2] Dated May 10, p. 1522.

[3] See telegram 4023 to Paris, May 11, p. 1534.

[4] May 11.

publicity should be avoided, if possible. To provide cover, if needed, his visit may be treated as related to preparation of military aid program for coming year. Officer will deal only with military aspects. You will handle all other aspects and will feel free to accompany him on his discussions.

3. You should make it perfectly clear to Laniel that our response to his request is due to our desire to be helpful and that general officer would give his best personal judgment on specific inquiries, but he will not in any way engage the responsibility of the US. In particular his participation in French discussions does not imply any future commitment to intervene.[5]

DULLES

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[5] In telegram 4309 from Paris, May 11, Ambassador Dillon stated the following: "I informed Laniel this morning of answer to question (*a*) contained Deptel 4017. In this connection I stressed paragraph 3 of reference telegram and Laniel replied that he understood perfectly and that his immediate desire under question (*a*) was to obtaining the best possible military advice. He realizes fully that there is no implication of any future commitment and he is very grateful for prompt reply." (751G.00/5–1154)

751G.00/5–1054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 10, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received May 11—5: 08 a. m.]

2311. Repeated information Geneva 76, Paris 803, Hanoi unnumbered. I had a general conversation with De Jean this morning on situation we now confront following fall of Dien Bien Phu and in light of current conference at Geneva.

De Jean showed me his lengthy telegram of May 3 to Bidault outlining in geographic terms minimal conditions for a military armistice. I suggest that USDel Geneva can secure these recommendations from French delegation and post them on a map of Vietnam. If not I shall telegram summary of text with De Jean's permission. In essence his proposals are that most of Tonkin delta remain in French-Vietnamese hands but with a corridor which would link area north and west of delta to Viet Minh-held territory in Central Annam. Thai country would go to Viet Minh. Most of central plateau region in vicinity of Kontum and Banmethuot would be in Vietnamese-French hands and all of Cochin China. However, De Jean recognized extreme difficulty of separating sheep from goats in areas heavily infiltrated by Viet Minh such as Transbassac and southern tip of Cochin Chinese peninsula.

De Jean showed me Bidault's draft of terms for an armistice dated April 30 and revised as of May 3, which are more complicated and on whole less satisfactory than those set out Secto 143 amended as indicated Secto 152.[1] Particularly dangerous in these drafts is Bidault's suggestion that political fate of Vietnam be left to negotiation between Vietnamese and Viet Minh. This would simply result in absorption of former by latter. De Jean is aware of this danger and is cautioning Bidault against any such provision.

De Jean will recommend that military terms of armistice agreed upon, be entrusted to a mixed commission made up of former belligerents. He fears that an international commission could only be formed after months of haggling and that British would insist on incorporating "undesirable elements" such as Burmese or Indians.

I said that if Geneva powers decided on a mixed commission Communist side might demand a seat for Red China. In that case I thought it would be useful if there were a US representative on armistice commission.

De Jean said that mixed commission should devote its attention only to enforcing strictly military provisions of an armistice. Political aspects of armistice might well be entrusted to an international commission appointed by UN Security Council.

De Jean then discussed more basic problems. He said, "There are three issues: First, should there be an armistice at all? Second, if there is no armistice, how to continue war successfully? Third, if there is an armistice, what powers will provide effective guarantees for compliance with armistice agreement?

De Jean said he felt time had come for very frank talking between US and French Governments. He said loss of Dien Bien Phu by no means signified loss of war. There were still some very powerful trump cards which would be played and which if played correctly could result in victory. French still have a powerful military force in Indochina and are able to use that force to contain Viet Minh. However, as was instanced in tragic miscalculation of Navarre at Dien Bien Phu, character of war had now changed and overt participation by China in form of sending modern artillery and other weapons would no doubt be stepped up if hostilities continued. Under such a postulate it would not be possible for French and Vietnamese forces alone to meet such a strengthened adversary. However, if US Government were willing to contemplate use of overwhelming air strength against Communist China, situation might be radically altered.

Some overall considerations apply to readiness of US to undertake a military guarantee of an armistice agreement. De Jean did not think British could be brought into such an arrangement and said that French alone could not provide an effective guarantee.

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[1] For text of telegram Secto 143 from Geneva, May 8, see vol. XVI, p. 730. Regarding telegram Secto 152, see footnote 1 to Secto 143.

These considerations made it necessary that there be a frank stocktaking of our joint assets and a candid reappraisal of where we stood. If for constitutional reasons or climate of feeling in Congress or fact of elections this year, it was not possible for US to come in either in guaranteeing an armistice or in backstopping renewed hostilities with something more than end-item support, at least we should face the facts calmly and draw necessary conclusions.

De Jean asked if I had no other than Secretary's latest statement which reached us in USIA Wireless File so badly garbled that I was not yet sure what Secretary had actually said. It seemed from such fragments as had reached us that Secretary was advocating speedy negotiation of some form of collective security pact but I had had no other word on this subject.[3]

McClintock

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[3] Reference is presumably to the Secretary's speech of May 7; see footnote 5, p. 1496.

751G.00/5–1154 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET Saigon, May 11, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 1:53 p. m.]

2331. Repeated information Paris 811. Last night De Jean told me that he had it on absolute authority that it was on United States initiative that a carrier air strike was offered to relieve Dien Bien Phu. He said Bidault had not made a request for such aerial support until it had already been offered with some insistence by Admiral Radford.

If this is part of the mythology of our times, I feel I should be authorized to refute this statement, as otherwise it will contribute to increasing proportions of French fairy tale that US, by actions of commission or omission, is equally responsible for whatever happens in Indochina.

McClintock

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President"

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET [Washington,] May 11, 1954.
PERSONAL AND PRIVATE

MEMORANDUM OF LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT

1. We discussed the draft cable to Ambassador Dillon dealing with the conditions on which the United States might intervene in Indo-

china.[1] We discussed this in terms of the implication that we might conceivably go ahead without the active participation of the United Kingdom. I pointed out that while this had its grave disadvantages in indicating a certain breach, there were perhaps greater disadvantages in a situation where we were obviously subject to UK veto, which in turn was in Asian matters largely subject to Indian veto, which in turn was largely subject to Chinese Communist veto. Thereby a chain was forged which tended to make us impotent, and to encourage Chinese Communist aggression to a point where the whole position in the Pacific would be endangered and the risk of general war increased.[2]

The President agreed to this fully. He proposed a change in the cable to Dillon (Para 2 (*e*) third sentence) after the words U.S. forces—"principally air and sea". With this change he authorized the cable to be dispatched.

2. I went over with him the proposed draft of instructions to General Smith.[3] He agreed with their tenor, suggesting that the opening paragraph should contain a reference to their being confirmatory of oral instructions so as to explain the time lag.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

[Annex]

Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State[4]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 11, 1954.

PERSONAL AND PRIVATE

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. *Risk of Expansion of War*

All US estimates agree on at least 50 per cent chance of Chinese Communist reaction to US intervention. A split among US and its allies might well increase this risk materially.

Consequently, any decision to intervene would have to be accompanied by substantial changes in military programs and other measures to anticipate possible Chinese reaction.

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[1] See telegram 4023 to Paris, May 11, *infra*.

[2] A handwritten marginal notation at this point read as follows: "See attachment re this paragraph."

[3] The instructions sent to Under Secretary Smith at Geneva regarding the Indochina phase of the Conference were transmitted in telegram Tosec 138 to Geneva, May 12. For text, see vol. XVI, p. 778.

[4] The copy of this memorandum in the files of the Policy Planning Staff indicates that it was drafted on May 11 by Robert R. Bowie, Director of S/P, for the use of the Secretary at his meeting with the President that day. (PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina")

2. Consequences for British and NATO Alliance

If US intervention results in war expanding to China, and Soviet Union became involved, British and NATO opinion might well be split as to support of US in use of any British and NATO bases.

3. Method of Conducting Operation

Major foreign ground forces will be required to hold areas while Viet Nam forces are being trained. Present French forces will provide greater part, but US should assume need for some US ground forces and for large forces under some contingencies. US should not intervene with idea it can be done cheaply by air and naval forces.

Any use of atomic weapons will raise very serious problems of Asian opinion and attitude of our allies.

751G.00/5–1054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, May 11, 1954—4 : 09 p. m.
NIACT

4023. Eyes only Ambassador from Secretary. Reurtel 4287 and our 4017.[2]

1. We fully realize need for prompt decisions regarding internationalizing the war. Various factors combine to suggest that it may be premature to pose issue of internationalizing for decision at this moment:

(*a*) If raised before French realize fully that choice is between internationalizing and virtual surrender, proposal to internationalize might well be rejected, leaving no alternative but capitulation.
(*b*) British are more likely to support or acquiesce in intervention if Geneva has been shown to offer no prospect of solution.
(*c*) Australian government would almost certainly not take a position until after elections at end of May.

Even so it seems desirable for Laniel to know in general terms conditions we would require for intervention because of influence on current French decisions in military field in Indo-China and in political field in Geneva.

2. President would ask Congress for authority to use armed forces of US in area to support friendly and recognized governments against aggression or armed subversion fomented from without, provided he could then state that following conditions had been or would be met:

(*a*) That US military participation had been formally requested by France and three Associated States;

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State and approved by President Eisenhower. Repeated to Geneva as Tedul 54, "eyes only Under Secretary from Secretary."

[2] Both dated May 10, pp. 1522 and 1529, respectively.

(*b*) That Thailand, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom also had received similar invitations and that we were satisfied that first two would also accept at once; that next two would probably accept following Australian elections, if US invokes ANZUS Treaty; and the U.K. would either participate or be acquiescent;

(*c*) That some aspect of matter would be presented to UN promptly, such as by request from Laos, Cambodia or Thailand for peace observation commission;

(*d*) That France guarantees to Associated States complete independence, including unqualified option to withdraw from French Union at any time;

(*e*) France would undertake not to withdraw its forces from Indochina during period of united action so that forces from U.S.—principally air and sea [3]—and others would be supplementary and not in substitution;

(*f*) That agreement was reached on training of native troops and on command structure for united action.

FYI Radford contemplates French Supreme Command with U.S. Air Command. End FYI.

3. U.S. would require all these conditions to be accepted by French Cabinet and authorized or endorsed by French National Assembly. This would be especially important in view of uncertain tenure of any French government: U.S. would have fully committed itself once it agreed to intervene and would have to be able to rely on adherence to conditions by any successor French government.

4. You will realize that intervention might involve consequences of utmost gravity. Reactions of Communist bloc could not be predicted. Also, if it became necessary to proceed without active U.K. participation, the implications would be extremely serious and far-reaching. Removal any taint colonialism would be essential to success of operation in Indochina, to attraction of potential Asian support, and to forestalling opposition by other Asian and Middle Eastern countries. In view of these factors, you will appreciate that conditions indicated would be absolutely indispensable as basis for our action.

5. The U.S. would continue its efforts to broaden united action operation by seeking to bring in other countries whose interests are affected and to formalize the coalition as, for example, by negotiation of regional defense pact.

6. Unless you consider timing unwise in light of factors stated in para 1, you may outline foregoing orally to Laniel as your estimate of indispensable conditions in light of your knowledge of current

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[3] According to a notation on the draft copy of this telegram in the files of the Policy Planning Staff, the words "principally air and sea" were added by the President. (PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "1954 Chron") See memorandum of conversation by the Secretary of State, *supra*.

high-level thinking in Washington in advance receipt by you of official reaction to your report of his proposal. You should leave nothing in writing with him. You should make clear to him, however, that we would not wish to proceed with any of this program unless National Assembly supports position of his government, as outlined first paragraph your cable. If that occurs and Laniel wishes to pursue matter on basis outlined above, he should formally request opening of discussions with us on procedure for fulfilling essential conditions. At that stage U.S. would expect to consult with U.K.

7. If you decide unwise to talk with Laniel now on above basis, please cable.[4]

DULLES

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[4] In telegram 4332 from Paris, May 12, Ambassador Dillon responded as follows: "In view governmental crisis, do not intend discuss Deptel 4023 with Laniel at this time." (751G.00/5–1254) The governmental situation was particularly uncertain in view of new discussion on Indochina in the National Assembly which began on May 11 and concluded with a vote of confidence on May 13. For information on these proceedings, see footnote 1, p. 1550.

751G.00/5–1254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 12, 1954—8 p. m.

[Received 12:59 p. m.]

2363. Repeated information Paris 828, London 61, Geneva 95, Hanoi 445. In informal conversation with Consul Hanoi over weekend immediately following fall Dien Bien Phu, General Cogny and French delegate Compain have indicated preliminary opinion that if Viet Minh were as badly hurt as French hope and believe they were at Dien Bien Phu and if rainy season comes on in full force on time or early, Viet Minh will not be able to mount their offensive in delta until October. Should this prove to be the case, Cogny believes that he will be able to prepare defenses Hanoi and Haiphong and perhaps connecting link with some confidence withstand Viet Minh attack provided, he underscores, reinforcements are made available to him. He believes that reinforcements on scale he requires do not presently exist in Indochina.

On other hand, should Viet Minh not be as badly hurt as French believe and should full force rainy season be delayed, situation Hanoi and delta will be exceedingly grave.

In Saigon, De Jean estimates that Cogny has good chance to hold the delta provided two groupes mobiles from other forces Indochina are made available immediately. Should Viet Minh attack in force two more groupes mobiles would be required for Cogny as minimum reinforcements necessary.[1]

McCLINTOCK

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[1] Telegram 659 from Hanoi, May 13, contained additional information on the military situation as viewed by General Cogny. (751G.00/5–1354)

751G.00/5–1254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 12, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 12:59 p. m.]

2356. Repeated information priority Paris 823, priority Geneva 91, priority London 59. DeJean sent for me this morning. He said his government had transmitted text of Viet Minh armistice proposals and asked for comment from him and Navarre. Although DeJean has not yet sent in his comment, as Navarre is still in Hanoi and he desired to confer with me, he said his reply will be that to accept Viet Minh proposal will mean complete capitulation.

DeJean reaffirmed need for US and France to sit down and exchange exceedingly candid opinions as to where each government stood and what each government could do to meet situation both in Geneva and in Indochina. I allowed him to read paraphrase of Deptel 2233, sent Geneva Tedul 46, repeated Paris 4002,[1] and he was much encouraged to see that Secretary had already agreed that such an interchange of views was acceptable to US.

DeJean said that when he and Navarre sent in their joint comment he would insist that French make no rejoinder to Viet Minh armistice proposals before such a joint US-French appraisal of situation had been undertaken and common line of policy had been adopted.

Re published rumours that Western powers might seek to save something from disaster by bolstering Cambodia and Laos and accepting Communist domination of Vietnam, DeJean said that this would be worse than any Munich. Once Communists had Vietnam there would be absolutely no barrier between them and all of southeast Asia. Furthermore, such a victory would so enhance prestige of Communist China that entire balance of power in Pacific would be affected. On basis of his own experience as Ambassador in Tokyo he thought Japanese policy would commence to change and would tend toward *rapprochement* with new and powerful Peking. DeJean will give me text of joint report after he has seen Navarre and I shall telegraph summary.[2]

McCLINTOCK

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[1] See footnote 1, p. 1516.
[2] See telegram 2384 from Saigon, May 13, p. 1557.

751G.00/5–1254

Memorandum of Conversation, by Paul J. Sturm of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 12, 1954.

Subject: Situation in Indochina and Possible Defense Arrangements in Southeast Asia

Participants: Senator Mike Mansfield
Mr. Francis R. Valeo, Chief, Foreign Affairs Section, Legislative Reference Service
Mr. Paul Sturm, PSA

I lunched with Senator Mansfield today at his request. The Senator and Mr. Valeo stayed with me two days last September in Hanoi. Senator Mansfield asked what information I had regarding latest developments in Indochina. I informed him that dangerous military pressures seemed to be building up already against the Tonkin Delta and that military developments in that area were likely to have more bearing on the course of negotiations at Geneva than was generally realized.

Senator Mansfield mentioned that he had just come from a Foreign Relations Committee meeting at which the Secretary had discussed principles governing U.S. participation in the Geneva Conference.[1] I asked Senator Mansfield if he was satisfied with the course of action we have followed thus far. He replied that he was reserving judgment because he had not noticed in the document read by the Secretary to the Committee any reference to a U.S. position regarding possible partition of Vietnam. I brought out that the paragraph which says that the U.S. is not prepared to give its approval, express or implied, to any settlement which would have the effect of subverting lawful governments of the Associated States or of permanently impairing their territorial integrity, should adequately cover that point. The Senator said that if such was the case, he would probably give his approval to the statement.

Senator Mansfield brought up the subject of a possible regional security pact and expressed the opinion that it would have to be based upon a voluntary association of the nations in the area, and could not be artificially stimulated by the U.S., although we would of course have to underwrite any effective action undertaken by such a grouping. Senator Mansfield went on to say that he believed the potential role of India as a *de facto* ally of the free world in Asia has been underestimated by persons who have let themselves be affected by Nehru's frequently annoying and uncooperative attitudes.

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[1] Secretary Dulles appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee at 3 p.m., May 11, and before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at 10:30 a.m., May 12. On each occasion, he read the text of basic instructions to be sent to the U.S. Delegation at Geneva. For text of telegram Tosec 138 to Geneva, May 12, containing the instructions, see vol. XVI, p. 778.

I mentioned to the Senator that Walter Lippmann had expressed similar thoughts regarding the present and future importance of Nehru to the free world in the Far East and had pointed out to me yesterday that Nehru's policies are nearly identical with those pursued by this nation in its early days. Mr. Lippmann added that if these Indian policies were expressed, as they might well be, in the language of *The Federalist* they would be more readily understood here and would find a responsive echo.

Senator Mansfield was struck by this parallel and suggested that thought might be given to the proclamation of a "Nehru Doctrine" for South and Southeast Asia. The Senator remarked that the enforcement of our own Monroe Doctrine in the early days of the Republic depended implicitly on the support of the British Navy. We might find it advantageous similarly to underwrite, with equal discretion, any Nehru doctrine directed against an expansion of Communist "colonialism."

Senator Mansfield asked what my personal ideas were with regard to (*a*) the importance to the U.S. of Indochina, (*b*) the importance to us of Southeast Asia, and (*c*) whether, in fact, the defense of Southeast Asia would be possible if Indochina were lost. I replied that it seems to me that the importance of holding the line in Indochina and Southeast Asia goes far beyond the local scene. It has been our policy both in Europe and in Northeast Asia to maintain pressures against the USSR, its allies and satellites. To accept the writing-off of Southeast Asia or even of Indochina would imply and symbolize a slackening of those pressures which might be expected to have unfortunate repercussions upon our position in all other parts of the world. Whether it proved militarily possible or not to defend Vietnam as well as Laos and Cambodia at this stage, to write them off or even to give the appearance of writing them off without a struggle would be very harmful to our moral position in the free world, and subsequently to our military position as well.

Getting down to more specific terms, Senator Mansfield asked what it might be possible for us to do, militarily, in Indochina. I offered as a purely personal idea that an initial limited intervention with ground forces, primarily in the Haiphong area, might enable us to hold the line until we could undertake serious training of a National Army and the construction of a regional defense organization, of which that National Army should be a part, and which might have a reasonable prospect of securing the area, so long as it were logistically supported by us and morally supported by its neighbors.

Senator Mansfield remarked that it now is evident that our most serious mistake thus far with regard to Indochina had been to assume that a military victory was possible, in the absence of suitable political settlements between France on the one hand and the Associated States on the other.

Comment:

On each previous occasion on which I have talked with Senator Mansfield, and as recently as April 21, he has been vehemently opposed to the use of American ground forces in Indochina. Today however he did not react adversely when I mentioned this possibility.

751G.00/5–1254

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor (MacArthur)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 12, 1954—2–2:30 p. m.

Subject: Indochina

Participants: Secretary Dulles
Ambassador Bonnet
Mr. MacArthur

At his request Ambassador Bonnet called on the Secretary this afternoon. He opened the conversation by saying he had brought copies of the two treaties which France had signed with Vietnam to show the Secretary.[2] In the meantime, however, he understood that the treaties had been made public today by the Vietnam representative at Geneva. The latter, he said, had made an excellent presentation at Geneva according to ticker reports. Since we would doubtless be receiving the English text from our delegation in Geneva of these two treaties (one a treaty of independence and the other a treaty of association), he would not take up more of the Secretary's time with this question. In response to the Secretary's request, Bonnet agreed to send copies of the French texts of these two treaties to the Secretary.

The Secretary said that in a recent conversation with Romulo,[3] he had urged Philippine recognition of the Associated States. Romulo had replied that his government had never seen any of the treaties France was negotiating with the Associated States and until they had seen the treaties, it was difficult to judge whether or not the Associated States had in fact received their independence. The Secretary suggested the desirability of the French Government letting the Philippine and other friendly governments have the text of the treaties in question. Ambassador Bonnet nodded in apparent agreement and then was highly critical of Romulo saying that in speeches the latter continued to charge France with colonialism in Indochina. He said that some day he would probably get into a violent argument with Romulo if he did not refrain from making this charge.

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[1] A summary of this conversation was transmitted to Paris in telegram 4048 of May 12 (Tedul 60 to Geneva and 2269 to Saigon). (751G.00/5–1254) In telegram 2467 from Saigon, May 19, McClintock relayed Bonnet's account of this meeting based on information received from Paris by High Commissioner Dejean. (751G.00/5–1954)

[2] For the texts of the French–Vietnamese Treaties, actually dated June 4, 1954, see *L'Année Politique, 1954*, pp. 572–573; for English translations, see Cameron, *Viet-Nam Crisis*, vol. I, pp. 268–271.

[3] Gen. Carlos P. Romulo of the Philippines; Personal Representative of President Magsaysay on visit in the United States.

Ambassador Bonnet then referred to the proposals put forward by the Vietminh at Geneva. He said they were cleverly devised and worded to appeal superficially to French opinion. The reference to the French Union and continuing cultural and economic ties were sugar coating with which the Vietminh coated their pill. The Secretary said he had been interested in the Vietminh indication that the Associated States, if taken over by the Communists, would remain in the French Union. Ambassador Bonnet said that it was a novel idea to have "three Bolshevik states" in the French Union.

Ambassador Bonnet then said that he wished to speak about the real purpose for his visit today. He referred to the Secretary's talk with him last Saturday, May 8,[4] in which the Secretary had told him that the U.S. was prepared to sit down and discuss with the French the "internationalizing" of the Indochina war. The French Government believed that the time had now come to have such conversations with the United States. It was of the greatest importance that the French Government know the attitude of the United States, the circumstance in which it would intervene in the Indochina conflict and precisely what it would do. The French Government must know the U.S. position in the event Geneva does not lead to a cessation of military hostilities in Indochina and the military situation there requires France to request outside assistance. At present the French Government recognizes that U.S. intervention in Indochina must be based on the concept of collective action. However, there are a number of "ifs" and "conditions" which are not entirely clear. For example, it is doubtful whether the Australian Government could join in collective action until after the elections of May 29. Furthermore, the British, because of their concern about the position of Hong Kong and because of Nehru, may not be willing to join in collective action. Meanwhile time is passing and if there is not some military assistance from without, the military situation in Indochina may deteriorate to the point where Indochina is lost before outside assistance is brought to bear. With respect to this problem the attitude of the U.S. is the only really important factor. The French recognize our reluctance to proceed without the U.K. but what the U.S. decides to do is the key.

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[4] For the memorandum of that conversation, see p. 1516.

Secretary Dulles replied that we were prepared to begin talks with the French virtually at once. He did not, however, believe it would be wise to begin such talks until the outcome of the French vote of confidence scheduled to take place tomorrow was known.[5] He said that this problem had been considered in general terms by the President, the NSC and the JCS and we were in a position to discuss it with the French. Ambassador Bonnet fully agreed that talks should not start until after the outcome of the vote of confidence scheduled to take place tomorrow. While he hoped that Laniel would receive a majority, this was by no means certain. It would be a very close thing in any event. If Laniel does receive a vote of confidence, the French must then know what will happen and what assistance they can expect if they resist Communist pressure at Geneva. The Secretary said he agreed that the French should know where they stood. In particular he believed that if they had no alternative they would find it difficult to resist yielding to the Communists at Geneva, which would be a disaster of the first magnitude for France. The Secretary said that the best chance to prevent Geneva from failing was to have a sound alternative position to capitulation to the Communists.

There was then discussion as to where the discussion might be had. The Secretary said his initial reaction was that it might be best to hold them in Paris since it would make it easier to keep in touch with Laniel. Ambassador Bonnet said that it was all very difficult because Bidault was at Geneva and Laniel was in Paris. The Secretary suggested that Bidault could make a trip to Paris and Bonnet indicated that this was a possibility but depended on what was happening at Geneva. After further general exchange on this subject, Bonnet said that he would inform Paris that there seemed to be advantages in having the meeting in Paris but also other advantages in having it in Washington. He would ask the views of the French Government on this.

During the course of this conversation, the Secretary also referred to the unfortunate interpretation which had been placed on remarks he made in his press conference yesterday.[6] Bonnet said that the press was highly irresponsible and he had worked hard with both the French and U.S. press last evening to correct the erroneous interpretation which had been placed on the Secretary's words. Bonnet said that at the conclusion of the French cabinet meeting yesterday the Ministers had been greeted by about 100 news correspondents who informed them that the U.S. had taken the position that the U.S. had given up any hope of defending Indochina. This had created considerable confusion but he felt that the situation had now been straightened out. The Secretary made reference to the President's press conference this morning which Bonnet said had also helped to correct the false impression created by "irresponsible journalists" yesterday. Bonnet said it might be helpful if the State Department could issue another statement correcting the misinterpretation. After further discussion he said that in view of the President's statement [7] he did not believe anything further was necessary.

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[5] See footnote 1, p. 1550.

[6] Remarks delivered by Secretary Dulles at his news conference of May 11 were widely interpreted as an indication that the Secretary believed that Southeast Asia as a whole might be defended by means of collective security even if Indochina or part of it were lost. For the Dulles news conference statements of May 11, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 24, 1954, pp. 781–782.

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[7] At his news conference of May 12, President Eisenhower denied that differences existed between him and Secretary Dulles regarding Indochina and Southeast Asia. He also said: "I don't think the free world ought to write off Indochina." For the record of the conference, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pp. 466–475.

790.00/5-1254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET

Paris, May 12, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received May 13—1:22 a. m.]

4340. Repeated information Geneva 224, Saigon 517. Chargé Vietnamese High Commissariat called at his request 12:30 today to express grave concern over interpretation generally being accorded to Secretary's comments to press May 11 and to ask exact text to discuss further with Bao Dai and Buu Loc (who arrived Paris last evening). Chargé was visibly shaken. To begin, he stated, they had received information from reliable source that Cabinet in extraordinary session last evening had agreed negotiate settlement Indochina conflict "at any price". However, he stated, implications Secretary's statements May 11 as portrayed press concerned them more. Chargé stated US only hope Vietnamese and they now seriously afraid we preparing go along with French in accepting negotiated solution with Viet Minh rather than participate intensification war effort. He added impact Secretary's statements coming on top fall Dien-Bien-Phu and French Assembly developments was almost tantamount last straw. Not only would this, if implications true, he added, undermine Vietnamese effort continue war Vietnam in terms scramble mend fences Viet Minh in view strengthened position latter, but it would leave Vietnamese delegation Geneva in untenable position. Chargé posed rhetorical question how could Vietnamese make effective statement this afternoon at Geneva in view these developments?

Chargé was given copy partial text Secretary's press conference contained Deptel 4034, May 11 [1] and was cautioned against accepting speculative press versions thereof, Embassy officer stressing he sure Under Secretary had already had occasion Geneva to enlighten Vietnamese delegation this regard and place press versions Secretary's statements in proper context.

DILLON

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[1] Telegram 4034 to Paris, May 11, containing a partial verbatim text of the Secretary's press conference of that day, is not printed. (790.00/5-1154) Regarding the press conference, see footnote 6, *supra.*

751G.00/5-1254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, May 12, 1954—4 p. m.
[Received May 13—2:45 a. m.]

2354. Repeated information Paris 821, Geneva 90. Former Prime Minister Tam called on me yesterday evening. He confirmed previous reports reaching us of increasing political disintegration, particularly in South Vietnam, and seemed very dubious if much could be done to redress situation. He dismissed recent published pronouncements by splinter parties and religious sects professing fealty to Bao Dai and announcing forthcoming visit to France of self-appointed "councilors" to His Majesty as a typical stratagem of Nguyen De. Tam said, "Nguyen De brings these people to Bao Dai and they all agree that they prefer bright weather to rainy weather. This is then proclaimed as new evidence of union around Bao Dai. Furthermore, in this case they get free trip to France".

Tam said that just before Bao Dai's departure for France, Giao, Governor of Central Annam, had sent a Viet Minh emissary from Nhatrang to Dalat where he had secretly conferred with Bao Dai presumably on possibility of making arrangement between Viet Minh and present Vietnamese Government. Tam said that at first he was incredulous when this report reached him, but he had checked through sources in Dalat and could now assure me that meeting did, in fact, take place. (However, reliable French source close to Giao assures me that he could under no circumstances have arranged such a meeting since he is anathema to Viet Minh.)

Tam admitted that his son Hinh had dictatorial aspirations and said that he himself had been advised "by certain French sources" to overthrow Bao Dai and assume supreme power himself. However, he had refused to take this step because he was not certain if higher French authorities would countenance such action.

As for future, Tam was unreservedly gloomy. He saw no hope of overcoming sectarian differences or of incorporating religious private armies into National Army. He said, for example, that recent skirmish at Sadec (Embassy telegram 2353 repeated Paris 820)[1] was an open battle between Vietnamese National Army and forces of Hoa Hao. Furthermore, to intensify forces of division complete absence of control by national government over power of appointment of key officials such as regional governors and even prefects of cities—these nominations stemming exclusively from Bao Dai—made it impossible for any Vietnamese Government to administer the country as a responsible government.

Under these circumstances, Tam's present thinking tends toward acceptance of partition on 16th Parallel and hope that Cochin-Chinese Republic may be formed.[2] As for national elections, he said he could win them provided that, when country is disarmed following cease-fire and armistice, sufficient rifles and revolvers are left in hands of his adherents. He said calmly that he had won many elections that way.

McClintock

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[1] Telegram 2353 from Saigon, May 12, is not printed. (751G.00/5–1254)

[2] In telegram 2387 from Saigon, May 13, the Embassy reported having received information indicating that a movement was under way, involving Tam, to establish a Cochin-Chinese republic. The Embassy said that while not favoring movements leading to the further disruption of the Vietnamese state, it intended to watch this development closely, since a separate Cochin-Chinese state, possibly controlling southern Annam as well, might prove to be one method of holding an area in the south even if the north were lost to the Viet Minh. (751G.00/5–1354)

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT

Paris, May 13, 1954—11 a. m.
[Received 7: 34 a. m.]

4343. Repeated information niact Geneva 225, niact Saigon 518. Department limit distribution. Geneva limit distribution. Saigon eyes only McClintock. Situation in French Cabinet and particularly in Parliament has deteriorated considerably in last few days. Knowledge of serious military danger in delta is just becoming public and seems to be increasing desire for peace at any price. Even if Laniel government should survive confidence vote today, which is by no means certain, I feel that the pressure to accept Viet Minh terms as basis of negotiation will become irresistible unless some new element enters situation. It is obvious that Cabinet and Parliament do not now support strong position so far taken by Bidault at Geneva. Only new element which I can conceive of that could change present course of events would be public declaration and clarification of US position along lines of numbered paragraph 2 of Deptel 4023.[1] I would very much hope that question of specific right of withdrawal from French Union which does not seem important to Vietnamese could be omitted from statement as it would push strongest supporters of continued French action toward defeatist attitude.

It is very possible however that time is already too late for such action on our part and that even if it should be taken French Government would be forced by Parliament to accept Viet Minh armistice terms. However, public statement along these lines by US would have great advantage of clarifying to French opinion, and presumably to rest of world, US position which is not at all understood here. I do not feel that governmental discussions along lines requested by Bonnet in Deptel 4048 [2] would have necessary impact unless they were accompanied by public announcement along lines previously indicated.

At suggestion of Under Secretary I am planning fly Geneva late this afternoon, returning Paris early tomorrow afternoon.

DILLON

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[1] Dated May 11, p. 1534.
[2] See footnote 1, p. 1540.

751G.00/5-1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT

PARIS, May 13, 1954—2 p. m.
[Received 9:42 a. m.]

4347. Repeated information Saigon 519, niact Geneva 226. Limit distribution. Geneva for Under Secretary. Saigon eyes only Ambassador. I saw Maurice Schumann at noon today and he showed me Bonnet's cable reporting his conversation with Secretary. Substance of Bonnet's report identical with Deptel 4048.[1] Schumann then urged great importance of French being informed as soon as possible of US position. I said that this would naturally depend on the outcome of today's confidence vote. Schumann agreed but said that if result was favorable no time should be wasted.

I told him that on my return from Geneva tomorrow afternoon I expected to be in a position to give him and Laniel preliminary information regarding US government position. I said that I thought it was important that negotiations be centralized either in Paris or Washington and asked him for his views. He said that he thought Washington best for these negotiations but that in order to save time he hoped that I would see him and Laniel together on Friday afternoon [2] and give them whatever information I could.

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[1] See footnote 1, p. 1540.

He then told me that Bidault had taken a very strong position and was advising Laniel not to resign unless he was defeated by constitutional majority. If he should be defeated by such a majority Bidault was recommending that Laniel ask for dissolution of National Assembly and new election. I asked Schumann what the latest information was regarding the coming debate and he called Vidal in my presence. Vidal said they now thought government would get by.

DILLON

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[2] May 14.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 197th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, May 13, 1954 [1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

The following were present at the 197th Meeting of the National Security Council: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Acting Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Attorney General (for Items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5); the Postmaster General (for Item 2); the Secretary of Commerce (for Items 2 and 9); the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (for Items 1 and 5); the Federal Civil Defense Administrator (for Item 1); Assistant Secretary of Commerce Anderson (for Item 8); Marshall Smith, Department of Commerce (for Item 8); Newman Smith, Department of Commerce (for Item 2); Walter S. Delaney, Foreign Operations Administration (for Item 8); the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; James C. Hagerty, Secretary to the President; the White House Staff Secretary; the NSC Representative on Internal Security; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on May 14.

10. *Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security*

. . . .

Mr. [Allen] Dulles pointed out that there had been no substantial change in the military situation in the Tonkin Delta in the past few days despite the impression conveyed by the newspapers. There was no battle line in the Delta. The French were confronting enhanced infiltration by the Vietminh. This, of course, did not mean that the situation in the Delta was happy. What would happen there, predicted Mr. Dulles, would depend very largely on psychological factors. The French had sufficient forces in the area if the Vietnamese would stand up and fight with them; if not, there could be a debacle. A crucial factor would be the ability of the French to maintain control of the chief airfields in the Delta. These were vital for communication purposes. If the airfields were lost we could anticipate another Dien Bien Phu in the Tonkin Delta.

Mr. Dulles went on to say that there was not much in the way of military strength to build on in Cambodia and Laos. The problem in these two countries was their capacity to resist subversion.

One of the most discouraging features in the Indochina situation was the virtual collapse of the Vietnamese Government in Saigon as a result of dissension and the continued absence of Bao Dai.

. . . .

11. *Report on Developments Regarding the Geneva Conference and the Indochina Situation*

Mr. Cutler then called upon Secretary Dulles to report briefly with respect to developments at the Geneva Conference and progress with the development of the regional grouping for the defense of Southeast Asia.

(Owing to a previous engagement, the President was obliged to leave the meeting at this point.)

Secretary Dulles stated that as regards the effort to obtain the regional grouping, he was carrying on an operation with lots of scenery but not very much substance. We were having to mark time until we got the British reaction to our counter-proposal with regard to the Five-Power conference. No reply had yet come from Eden, but the hints which have reached us do not provide a good augury. Meanwhile, said Secretary Dulles, he had talked with the Ambassadors of Thailand and the Philippines. Secretary Dulles expressed the hope that Secretary Wilson's current trip to Manila would help to produce a better feeling on the part of the Filipinos. They believe, quite erroneously, that the five powers have already begun negotiations at Singapore and that they have been deliberately left out.

Secretary Dulles said that the press was currently doing a great deal of mischief. He could not recall a time when there had been such wild speculations and accusations that the United States had met diplomatic reverses which had never in fact occurred.

Secretary Dulles then turned to the reports from Paris, which he said were not very encouraging. The issue of the vote of confidence in the Laniel government would be faced today in the French Chamber. The thing looked extremely close. It was unlikely, thought Secretary Dulles, that Laniel would be defeated by a constitutional majority which would call for new elections. He might, however, resign if he was supported by less than a constitutional majority. The best guess was that he would squeak through because no other French politician wants to succeed him at this time.[2]

There seemed to be a growing sentiment in France to accept the current Vietminh proposal as the basis for a discussion of Indochina at the Geneva Conference. If this actually occurs, said Secretary Dulles, it would be nothing but a thinly disguised French surrender. However, there are some indications of a desire by the French Government to discuss with us the conditions which might result in U.S. armed intervention. The actual text of our preconditions had not yet, however, been disclosed to Laniel.

If there were a new government in France, Secretary Dulles thought it almost certain to be further to the left than the Laniel government. This would probably mean a capitulation on Indochina and greater hostility to the EDC. A French collapse seemed to be in prospect as grave as the collapse of 1940, with the distinct possibility of a French Government which would collaborate with the Soviets just as the French Government of the summer of 1940 collaborated with the Germans.

The National Security Council:

Noted an oral report by the Secretary of State on the status of efforts to form a Southeast Asia regional grouping; the situation in France; and developments at the Geneva Conference.

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[2] Regarding the vote of confidence, see footnote 1, *infra*.

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 13, 1954—4 p. m.
[Received 12:55 p. m.]

4352. Repeated information Saigon 521, Geneva priority 228. I lunched alone today with Rene Mayer and before leaving for National Assembly he said that he was still undecided as to his vote and would only make his decision after he had heard Laniel speak. He said there was a strong feeling against Laniel as being the man of Dien Bien Phu, but that he did not share this feeling. If Laniel made a good presentation and treated the National Assembly with a certain amount of frankness, he was prepared to vote for the government, in which case he felt a large majority of the Radical-Socialists would follow him and the government would be upheld. However, if Laniel did not provide any explanations and if he (Mayer) felt forced to vote against the government, he was sure the government would fall. If there should be a governmental crisis, he did not feel that it would last for very long in the present circumstances.

Mayer said that if he were President of the Republic he would ask a man who had never previously been in power to try and form the next government. I asked him if this meant Mendes-France and he said for all practical purposes, "yes".[1]

He then said that for him the Indochina problem now was really a question as to whether or not the delta could be held. If it did not appear that the delta could be held by French forces acting alone (and from his information he very much doubted that the French forces would be adequate for this purpose) it would be necessary to find out whether or not the US was ready to assist promptly in the defense of the delta. If this was not possible it would be necessary to negotiate a cease-fire at Geneva on the best terms possible, but in any event to negotiate a cease-fire before the delta was seriously attacked. A military disaster in the delta would cause such serious consequences here in France that it must be avoided at all costs. Therefore, he felt that it was necessary for the US to make their position clear very promptly, not only as regards Indochina in general, but as regards the specific problem of the military defense of the Tonkin delta.

DILLON

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[1] The National Assembly discussion of the question of further postponement of debate on Indochina, which began on May 11, resumed on the afternoon of May 13 and culminated in a vote of confidence late that evening. The Laniel government survived by a vote of 289 to 287. For the record of the two days of discussions, see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats*, pp. 2336–2345 and 2368–2383. The Embassy submitted reports and observations on the proceedings in telegram 4358, May 13; telegrams 4367 and 4373, May 14; and in despatch 2939, May 18. (751.00/5–1354; 751.00/5–1454; 751G.00/5–1854)

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY HANOI, May 13, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 1 : 37 p. m.]

660. Repeated information Saigon 580, Paris 304, Geneva unnumbered; pouched Bangkok. Geneva for US Delegation. Governor Tri

called me to his office urgently this morning. He said he was profoundly disturbed by reports he had received of several statements made in Washington within past 24 hours by Secretary and Secretary Wilson. As he heard it on radio here, first of these statements was to effect that if Indochina fell, US would continue its efforts in rest of South Asia. The second of these statements, according to Tri, was in sense that fall of Indochina would not mean general catastrophe or loss all South Asia. Tri asked if I could give him fullest information about these statements. I replied that I had not yet received texts, but would immediately try to obtain them. (For Embassy, Saigon: If texts these statements available, please telegraph.)

Then Governor Tri said he understood that Secretary Wilson had said before leaving Washington for his Far Eastern trip that he did not plan visiting Indochina.[1]

Tri said he wanted me to know that statements such as these were being interpreted to mean that US was now in process joining France and United Kingdom in writing off Indochina. As result, individuals in North Vietnam who had committed themselves to struggle against communism were becoming deeply discouraged. On other hand, Viet Minh were taking full advantage of situation to impress on people that they were being abandoned by West and that it was high time for them to make their peace with their Viet Minh brothers. Governor Tri said this was producing a situation which could become increasingly difficult to meet, especially since people saw no concrete evidence of French Union military preparations in delta for effective resistance to Viet Minh.

Tri said that it was impossible for Vietnamese people successfully to resist "Communist flood" without assistance from abroad. No country, he commented, could stand alone in such a struggle. He emphasized, however, that North Vietnam would not go down without a fight. Plans were being made, he said, to continue the resistance even if French forces were withdrawn and no help from other quarters was received. Zones of resistance around Hanoi, Haiphong and along communications between these cities were being planned. These plans were discussed with Defense Minister Quat during his recent visit to Hanoi. As a last resort, Tri said Vietnamese planned to withdraw from Hanoi and make stand at Haiphong.

Comment: During short time which I have been in Hanoi, I have gained several definite impressions. First, there exists an effective government and administrative apparatus in North Vietnam. Second, there is mutual respect and close cooperation between North Vietnam and French civilian and military officials. This has been remarked not only in Hanoi but in outlying provincial centers and defense positions. Third, French civilian and military authorities seem to be making a conscious effort to support and play up the local government. Fourth, there appears to exist a substantial degree of unity in North Vietnam. My long talk with Bishop Chi confirmed Catholic support (2 million) for regional government. Fifth, North Vietnam Government has exploited with skill reports of possible division of Vietnam and thereby, at least publicly, thrown its weight behind idea of national unity. Six, North Vietnam officials have shown a stability and firmness in face present situation which has surprised me and others on Consulate staff who have been here much longer than I.

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[1] Secretary of Defense Wilson left Washington on May 12 for a tour of the Far East. He visited Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China, and the Philippines before returning to the United States on June 2.

I do not feel in a position to weigh these impressions but feel that they should be brought to attention of Embassy, Saigon, and Department. If conditions which produce these impressions do in fact exist and we feel they do, there is still time to make use of them. In all frankness it must be emphasized however, that time is swiftly running out.

CAMERON

751G.00/5-1354 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 13, 1954—1 p. m.
[Received 1:42 p. m.]

2374. Repeated information Paris priority 831, Geneva priority 98. I have no recourse but to dissent, with great respect, from concept set out in Department telegram 2238 (sent Paris 4007)[1] that "United States must push rapidly for development of Southeast Asia community, probably without Vietnam, but hopefully with Laos and Cambodia". Thought is added that such a community, including Burma, might offer fair chance to insulate remainder of Southeast Asia against possible loss of Vietnam.

Most regrettably there is no human resource in Cambodia nor Laos, on which to build a bulwark against Communist infiltration or aggression. Furthermore, in case of Cambodia, there is no geographic barrier against such aggression. Furthermore, once Communists have possession of complex of modern airfields in Vietnam, there is no barrier to the successful use of airpower against all of Southeast Asia. It will be recalled that Singapore was taken in 1940 by Japanese using Saigon as a base.

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[1] Telegram 2238 to Saigon, May 10, *inter alia*, repeated the text of Tedul 48 to Geneva, May 9. For text of Tedul 48, see vol. XVI, p. 745.

Only warlike people in Southeast Asia are the Vietnamese and particularly those residing in Tonkin. To leave this manpower base in hands of triumphant Communists and with nucleus of victorious Viet Minh troops, is merely to invite disaster.

Much as I am opposed to partition of Vietnam, I would rather resort to that desperate recourse, retaining above-all, important airbase at Tourane, than to contemplate building ramparts of sand in Cambodia and Laos.[2]

McCLINTOCK

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[2] A contrasting viewpoint was expressed by Charlton Ogburn, Regional Planning Adviser in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, in a memorandum to Acting Assistant Secretary Drumright dated May 11. Ogburn contended that Vietnam had been clearly beyond saving for 3 or 4 years. Should the proposed regional grouping undertake to defend Vietnam, the inevitable collapse of the latter would destroy the effectiveness and credibility of the regional organization. Furthermore, the regional security grouping should properly be directed toward defending Southeast Asian countries against armed invasion by Communist forces, not against indigenous Communist movements. (611.90/5-1154)

751G.00/5-1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 13, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 3:56 p. m.]

4357. Repeated information Saigon 522, Geneva niact 230. Embtel 4330, May 12.[1] Parodi this afternoon officially requested assistance U.S. Govt in repatriating Dien Bien Phu wounded. He said he understood this had been discussed most informally by Generals Fay and Norstad and he proposed that, if approval in principle were given, all necessary details be worked out by appropriate French and American military authorities.

Request urgently that Emb be authorized give approval in principle soonest. Believe also from psychological point of view most important that first contingent of wounded, if only token, be flown to France soonest possible.

DILLON

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[1] In telegram 4330 from Paris, May 12, not printed, Ambassador Dillon reported that General Fay, the French Air Force Chief of Staff, had discussed with General Norstad (Air Deputy, SHAPE) the possibility of U.S. assistance in the repatriation of French wounded from Dien Bien Phu. Dillon stated that he assumed that such a request would be approved, but requested confirmation from the Department. He also suggested that repatriation to France via Japan and the United States would have psychological advantages. He concluded that "from standpoint French internal psychological reaction nothing at this time could serve our purpose more than gesture of this sort." (751G.00/5-2154)

In telegram 4061 to Paris, May 13, which crossed Paris telegram 4357, the Department of State agreed that the United States should agree to provide assistance, with the ways and means to be worked out after the dimensions of the operation were determined. (751G.00/5-1254) The U.S. Delegation at Geneva concurred (in Secto 207, May 14) that it was important that the United States assist in every way possible. (396.1 GE/5-1454)

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, May 13, 1954—3 : 57 p. m.

4064. Limit distribution. Serious doubts about wisdom and efficacy public declaration suggested Paris 4343,[2] particularly prior to your discussion with French Government along lines Deptel 4023 [3] and in view conditions in paragraph 2 (*b*). Assuming Laniel gets vote of confidence today and conversations entered into shortly thereafter we will continue to bear this suggestion in mind and decide on issuance declaration in light of situation in France as we see it developing.

Recognize problem you have underlined that insistence upon French acceptance specific right of withdrawal from French Union may discourage even strongest supporters of continued French action. However, firmly believe that it essential remove any taint colonialism in order attract vital Asian support and forestall opposition other Asian and Middle Eastern countries. In talking to Schumann and Laniel Friday (Paris 4347) [4] you should emphasize this concern of ours and our belief that only way achieve these results would be through provision of this right of withdrawal. Fact that no public declaration contemplated now renders academic question of exclusion this provision in public presentation.

Regarding location negotiations, we strongly favor Paris over Washington for many reasons, including fact that French position much more uncertain than ours and you could more effectively explain our position and influence French position than Bonnet's cables.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Assistant Secretary Merchant. Repeated for information to Geneva as Tedul 63 and to Saigon as telegram 2282.
[2] Dated May 13, p. 1545.
[3] Dated May 11, p. 1534.
[4] Dated May 13, p. 1546.

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The United States Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY NEW YORK, May 13, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received 7 : 36 p. m.]

721. For the Secretary. Reference Department's Tosec 143, May 12, last paragraph Bangkok's 2255, May 11, Saigon's 2277, May 8 and

your Secret letter to me of May 10.[1] Regarding Indochina. I can see following advantages in United States taking immediate initiative in United Nations to set up POC subcommittee on Indochina and sending POC observers there:

1. It would lay the basis for possible future United Nations action, such as determining who the aggressors are in Indochina and getting more troops from other countries than would otherwise be the case if we have to fight there. It would expedite future United Nations action if and when time comes for it.

2. American people think principal reason for United Nations is to prevent World War III. In present Indochina crisis, they are expecting their government to take all the steps that practically can be taken, not merely some of them. They would welcome administration leadership and initiative in making at least some use of United Nations in present crisis. Proposed action would be responsive to views of members of Congress of both parties, and would provide for a demonstration of bipartisanship.

3. Proposed action would have at least some deterrent effect on Communist aggressive plans. It would contribute at least something to morale of Indochinese people and to their political stability. It would help lay the ghost of "Colonialism."

4. American people see no good coming out of Geneva Conference. They do not see any good reason why we are failing to take all the practical political action we can elsewhere merely because Geneva Conference is going on. We could avoid doing anything in the United Nations that would conflict with Geneva. We would be doing something in the United Nations that cannot be done at Geneva, or anywhere else. Proposed action would strengthen our hands at Geneva by keeping Communists guessing as to our tactics and strategy and forcing them to meet us on another front.

5. American people realize France has primary responsibility now, but fear United States in one way or another will be left holding the bag later. They are afraid that American boys will be sent overseas again, to fight somebody else's war. They do not understand why we continue for so long to defer to weak French leadership when our

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[1] For text of telegram Tosec 143 to Geneva, May 12, 1954, regarding a possible UN role in Indochina, see vol. xvi, p. 786. In telegram 2255 from Bangkok, May 11, not printed, Ambassador Donovan warned of the danger that the Communists might attempt to take over Laos and Cambodia before the United Nations could act. In the final paragraph, he emphasized the risk of awaiting the outcome of the Geneva Conference before taking action. (751H.00/5–1154) For text of telegram 2277 from Saigon, repeated to Geneva as 66, May 8, regarding the Viet Minh peace proposals set forth at Geneva, see vol. xvi, p. 727. For the Secretary's letter of May 10, see p. 1529.

own vital interests are so much at stake. Proposed action would tend to strengthen French strategic position.

6. United Nations action now would supplement and support your efforts to build up regional Southeast Asian arrangement which will take a long time to complete. It would reassure American people and world opinion that we mean what we say about regional arrangements in the framework of the Charter and that we are not in any sense bypassing United Nations, but are making use of it to extent it can be useful in present circumstances.

7. It was morally and politically invaluable to have reports from UNCURK on the outbreak of aggression in Korea in June 1950. It would be morally and politically invaluable to have reports from a United Nations POC group in Indochina in order to establish beyond any doubt the utter authenticity of the facts about Communist aggression. At present, there is no authoritative body which could, for example report on arrival of large number of so-called "Chinese volunteers" if such should occur. Existence of "handbook for [Chinese] political workers for going to Vietnam" [2] and the presence of Soviet advisers with the Viet Minh rebel forces is another valid argument for alerting POC.

8. From propaganda viewpoint it would be advantageous, in light of vicious attacks on United Nations by Molotov and Chou En-lai at Geneva, for United States to take an initiative in the United Nations. Their attacks indicate they fear the United Nations. We should, therefore, use it and not let them frighten us from using it.

9. There are some nations, such as India, that we want to get and keep on our side, but which very properly have not been invited to participate in Geneva, or the regional arrangements negotiations. By the proposed United Nations action they would have a sense of participation in what is going on and we would have a chance to educate them. The same is true of many other United Nations members, e.g., the Latin Americans. We might even consider making India a member of a POC sub-committee, or ask her to contribute observers. In this way, we would be getting her in on things on our side.

10. If French Government falls and/or Geneva breaks down, proposed United Nations action will help allay feelings of despair that nothing has been done or can be done.

11. Referring particularly to your letter of May 10, would point out that while you are right in your belief that it would be very difficult to obtain a two/three vote on a call for troops, the prospects for

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[2] Brackets in the source text. The document under reference, purporting to be a Chinese Communist guidebook for "volunteers" in Indochina, was published in *Far Eastern Notes*, No. 8 (May 7, 1954), pp. 7–11.

getting a two/three vote on the matter of alerting the POC are certainly more favorable.

12. Referring to the suggestion in your letter of May 10 that Vietnam be excluded, I would point that under the terms of the "uniting for peace" resolution of November 1950 the activities of the POC are not limited to cases of external aggression, but to "observe and report on the situation in any area where there exists international tension, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security". There certainly is no difficulty in showing that such condition does exist in Vietnam.

13. One method which could be used is to introduce in the Security Council a resolution to utilize the POC. Such a resolution would be subject to the veto. The other method would be a resolution calling for an emergency meeting of the General Assembly, within 24 hours. This would not be subject to the veto and could be passed on the vote of any seven members. We might do both seriatim. It is noteworthy that all of the top-flight Russians are away from New York at the present time which makes it rather an auspicious time from our viewpoint to try such tactics.[3]

LODGE

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[3] Ambassador Lodge made the following additional point in telegram 724 from New York, May 14: "In addition to the Security Council and the General Assembly, there is a third body which can instruct the Peace Observation Commission and that is the Interim Committee. It is noteworthy that on the committee neither the Soviet Union nor any of the Iron-Curtain countries are represented." (751G.00/5-1454)

751G.00/5-1354: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 13, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received 11:33 p. m.]

2384. Sent Geneva priority 102, Paris priority 836, repeated information London 62. Re final paragraph Embtel 2356,[1] De Jean this morning asked me to read text of his comments on Viet Minh armistice proposals (Secto 162, repeated Saigon 53, Paris 234, London 146).[2]

De Jean had considerably quieted down from rather hysterical outburst against these proposals which he expressed yesterday, although in their ensemble he regards them as exceedingly dangerous. Following are main points De Jean is making to Bidault. I shall associate them to numbered paragraphs of Viet Minh armistice proposals:

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[1] Dated May 12, p. 1537.
[2] For the text of Secto 162 from Geneva, May 10, see vol. XVI, p. 753.

(1) France has already recognized independence of Laos and signed joint declaration with Vietnam on independence. Declaration of July 3 last year promised independence and for all practical purposes Cambodia has already negotiated its independence.

(2) To withdraw all foreign troops from Associated States would mean complete destruction of French Expeditionary Force which is made up in large part of Vietnamese, Laotian and to some extent Cambodian elements but is still dependent on French cadres and colonial troops. France should counter by insisting that Expeditionary Corps remain in present strength and be allowed free circulation in agreed zones in order to protect friendly population and French nationals.

(3) De Jean points out similarity of Viet Minh election proposals to familiar Communist pattern both in North Korea and in Germany. First paragraph of numbered paragraph 3, he points out, would lend itself to effective Communist manipulation of "patriotic parties, groups and social organizations" and to rigging of elections in Communist favor by proposed local commissions. He insists that minimum of 18 months to two years must elapse before elections are undertaken and then only under conditions of scrupulous international control.

(4) This is merely rehash of Soviet proposition to enter NATO.

Paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 might be subject to profitable negotiation.

(8) Apparently De Jean's French text of Viet Minh proposals differs from English translation set out Secto 162 since in his interpretation it is possible that cease-fire would only be agreed upon after measures specified in preceding seven paragraphs have been agreed upon. However, De Jean admits he is not certain on this point, whereas from translation of our version of paragraph 8 it seems perfectly clear that a cease-fire will take place before implementation of measures referred to in paragraphs 1 to 7.

(8) (*a*) De Jean feels can be negotiated. (He has already given us details of recommendations sent to Bidault on zones to be occupied by Viet Minh and Franco-Vietnamese forces. I have prepared map showing these areas, and if Geneva has not already done so, will send photostatic copies by air pouch.)

(8) (*b*) There is discrepancy in enumeration of paragraphs since De Jean in his telegram to Bidault refers to paragraph 8(*c*) as being designed to eliminate Americans from Indochina and to cause cessation of US aid to Associated States. This in translation provided Secto 162 appears as subparagraph 8(*b*). De Jean recommends complete rejection of this concept and that French take position that independent countries of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were attacked by Viet Minh with active Chinese assistance, and that US has right to continue supply aid to these legitimate governments during period of armistice.

(8) (*c*) De Jean repeats his previous recommendation that cease-fire be supervised by mixed commission with possibility of over-all armistice provisions being entrusted to supervision of international commission.[3]

McCLINTOCK

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[3] Telegram 2388 from Saigon, May 13, contained a paraphrase of DeJean's telegram to Paris commenting on the Viet Minh proposals. (751G.00/5–1354)

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, May 13, 1954—10 p. m.
[Received May 14—5 : 35 a. m.]

2389. Repeated information Paris 840, Geneva 108. Re Embtel 2348, repeated Paris 817, Geneva 88.[1] De Jean said this morning that, speaking as an old friend, he could not refrain from frank comment that Secretary's press conference day before yesterday had done very much harm in Indochina. There was widespread fear here that our government had already written off Vietnam, to say nothing of Cambodia and Laos.

De Jean then asked if I had had any information whether Defense Secretary Wilson planned to visit Indochina. As I had not yet seen Deptel 2261,[2] I said "no", but that Vietnamese Foreign Office thought he was coming. De Jean said it would cause many people in Indochina to wonder if Mr. Wilson failed to visit this theater, since only active war against Communism in Asia is going on here, and if he did not come, public would be inclined to feel we had already discounted Indochina as a lost cause.

This afternoon De Jean's diplomatic counselor Froment-Meurice called and said he had just drafted a telegram for De Jean's signature which invites attention of French Government to fact that not only is Wilson not coming to Indochina but that apparently General Van Fleet has no intention of visiting this area either. De Jean will add that these facts coupled with visit of General Hull to Singapore will impel many in Indochina to wonder if US has adopted "MacArthur strategy" of island encirclement and thus bring them to feel that whole cause here is already lost so far as US strategic planners are concerned.[3]

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[1] In telegram 2348 from Saigon, May 12, not printed, McClintock reported that local press treatment of the news conference statements by Secretary Dulles on May 11 was giving rise to widespread fear that the United States had written off Indochina as a bad investment. (751G.00/5–1254)

[2] Telegram 2261 to Saigon, May 12, confirming that Secretary Wilson would not visit Vietnam, is not printed. (033.1100 DI/5–1254)

McClintock

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[3] Here follows the text of a memorandum by Douglas MacArthur II, Counselor of the Department of State, dated May 15. Reference is to Captain George W. Anderson, Jr., Assistant to Admiral Radford.

"Captain Anderson called me this morning and referred to Saigon's 2389 indicating that de Jean in Saigon was unhappy that neither Secretary Wilson nor General Van Fleet was going to visit Indochina. Captain Anderson said Admiral Radford wanted us to look at this telegram because if the Department of State desired Secretary Wilson to modify his schedule so as to visit Saigon, such a suggestion could be made. Admiral Radford wished it clearly understood that the Department of Defense considered this entirely a political matter and simply wanted to touch base with us.

"After consulting with Mr. Murphy, I called Captain Anderson and informed him that at this juncture we did not believe it desirable for Secretary Wilson to visit Saigon. It would give rise to widespread speculation and might imply some kind of commitment on our part for action on our part which would not be fulfilled. We would keep this matter under consideration but did not think anything should be done now. If we changed our views we would be in touch with him.

"Captain Anderson said he understood and agreed and that they would forget about this unless further word was heard from us." (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 289)

751G.00/5–1454 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET

Saigon, May 14, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received 10:36 a. m.]

2392. Repeated information Paris 842, Geneva 110. General Hinh, Chief of Staff Vietnamese Armed Forces, called on me last night. He said he had sent an "ultimatum" to Bao Dai demanding that he be given portfolios of Interior and National Defense, recommending that Quat be made Minister of National Economy, and concluding that unless such action were taken within one month, he would not be responsible for consequences.

Hinh's estimate of rapidly deteriorating political situation is that Bao Dai regime cannot last more than 30 days unless action such as he recommends is taken or Bao Dai personally returns to assume reins of government. This latter action, however, Hinh does not expect will happen.[1]

Hinh confirmed report set forth Embtel 2387, repeated Paris 838, Geneva 106[2] of growing movement to form Cochin-Chinese republic.

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[1] In telegram 2372 from Saigon, May 13, McClintock reported that Defense Minister Phan Huy Quat had stated, citing recent desertions, that the internal situation had so deteriorated that all semblance of government might disappear within 10 days. The Chargé further indicated that according to certain French authorities, unless Bao Dai returned and faced up to his responsibilities within 10 days to 3 weeks there would no longer be a State of Vietnam. (751G.00/5–1354)

[2] See footnote 2, p. 1545.

He said leading element in this group was former Prime Minister Huu, but admitted that his father, Tam, was likewise tending in that direction. (Cf. Embtel 2355, repeated Paris 822.)[3]

It is quite apparent that Hinh is heading for dictatorship. Much will depend in event he undertakes a *coup d'etat* on attitude populace will take toward an army which is generally disliked because of arrogance and exactions of officer corps and troops. Much likewise will depend attitude French High Command. I have rarely seen preparations for military dictatorship undertaken so openly and with such naiveté.

McClintock

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[3] Telegram 2355 from Saigon, May 12, is not printed. (751G.00/5-1254)

751G.00/5-1454 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET Saigon, May 14, 1954—3 p. m.

[Received 11 : 24 a. m.]

2394. Repeated information Paris 843, Geneva 111, London 64, Hanoi unnumbered. This morning De Jean asked me to read his telegram to Bidault analyzing motives behind Viet Minh armistice proposals on which he commented as set forth Embtel 2384, repeated Geneva 102, Paris 836, London 62 and 2388, repeated Paris 839, Geneva 107.[1]

De Jean says primary objective of Communists is to force withdrawal of United States from Asia in general and Indochina in particular. An objective of equal importance is to shatter alliance of US with France in NATO. Acceptance by France of Viet Minh armistice proposals would be calculated in Communist strategy so to arouse antipathy of American people that France would no longer be judged worthy in US eyes of being regarded as useful ally.

Second main objective of Communists as indicated Viet Minh armistice proposals is to eliminate France itself from Indochina. De Jean points out that military provisions of armistice proposals clearly contemplate withdrawal of all French forces from this peninsula. Although lip service is paid to seeming preservation of French cultural and economic influence here, De Jean draws parallel between Viet Minh proposals and what happened to French cultural and economic institutions in Czechoslovakia and Rumania. He concludes that for France to agree to essence of Viet Minh offer would mean not only abdication of France of its responsibilities here, but would be beginning of end of France in Europe also.[2]

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[1] For telegram 2384 from Saigon, May 13, see p. 1557; regarding telegram 2388, see footnote 3, p. 1559.

McCLINTOCK

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[2] Telegram 2315 to Saigon, May 15, read as follows: "For McClintock from the Secretary. If you deem appropriate, please orally tell De Jean that I personally read with great attention your reports of his views, as for example your 2394. I believe he has a clear insight into situation. Give him my best regards." (751G.00/5–1454)

751G.00/5–1454

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor (MacArthur) [1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 14, 1954.

Notes Made by Mr. MacArthur for his own information, following a meeting between the Secretary and Mr. Allen Dulles.[2]

In a conversation with the Secretary, Mr. Allen Dulles said he and some of his people had been thinking about steps which might be taken to bolster the situation in Indochina. He said they had come up with the following ideas as possibilities for further consideration:

1. It was important to bolster the internal political situation in Vietnam. The return of Bao Dai might be helpful but perhaps he should delegate his powers to a strong person. If Bao Dai would not return, perhaps he could make such a delegation of authority. The present situation was disintegrating because there was no real leadership and most of the key Vietnamese were in Europe.

The Secretary showed Mr. Dulles a draft telegram since despatched to Paris, Geneva, Saigon, and Hanoi requesting our people to discuss this matter with the French and give us any ideas which might be developed.[3]

2. The second point that seemed essential was to clean up the military command situation in Indochina. Navarre was pretty well discredited and Cogny seemed to be the only available individual who had the knowledge and ability to succeed him. If there was anything to be done to have Cogny replace Navarre, this would probably be helpful. The Secretary mentioned that Admiral Radford had indicated Cogny had been out in Indochina for three years and was not in too good health. Mr. Sturm was queried (he had seen Cogny three weeks ago before departure from Indochina) and he said that Cogny seemed to be in good shape. (There was no further discussion on this point and

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[1] The source text bears the handwritten notation "No copies, no distribution."

[2] The appointment book of Secretary Dulles indicates that this meeting occurred at 4 p. m. Those present were the Secretary, Allen Dulles, MacArthur, and Sturm of PSA (for part of the meeting). (Princeton University, Dulles papers, "Daily Appointments")

[3] The telegram has not been identified.

there was no decision on how it might be possible to encourage Navarre's replacement by Cogny. There was general agreement, however, that this change would be most desirable.)

3. Mr. Dulles said it seemed important to get the general officer requested by Laniel over to Paris to talk to the French.

The Secretary said the officer had left this afternoon at 3 o'clock.

4. Mr. Dulles suggested that it might be useful to send one or two officers from our MAAG to Laos and Cambodia. They would be sent without fanfare, but their presence might help to bolster the Laotians' and Cambodians' morale as indicative of our interest.

The Secretary indicated that this might be a possibility but we wished to avoid building up extravagant expectations in either country or committing our prestige in the face of the present precarious situation, which might come apart in a matter of days or several weeks.

Mr. Dulles agreed and said his thought was that a couple of officers might go to each capital and be attached to our missions for observation purposes and to get a first-hand look at the situation. The Secretary indicated that he did not see objection to this. I had the impression that Mr. Dulles would explore this possibility further.

5. Mr. Dulles made reference to Ambassador Donovan's proposal regarding the building of an airfield in Thailand.[4] He said he knew the military objected to assigning and tying down a Wing in Thailand, but he thought we should go ahead and build an airfield, leaving open the question of the planes that would use it. This action, he felt, would bolster the morale of the Thais in their continued independence and security.

The Secretary expressed general agreement. He added that he had talked to Admiral Radford about this question, and Admiral Radford had indicated a strong reluctance to do much with respect to Thailand. The Admiral had expressed the view that we should go after the seat of Communist power in the Far East, namely, China. If we did not do this he felt that measures we took around the periphery of Indochina would be of little avail. It was pointed out to Admiral Radford that whereas Asiatic peoples might be very glad to receive the support of the US to enable them to maintain their integrity and independence, they would be reluctant or opposed to joining with the US in an attempt to destroy Communist power in China. Psychologically, any efforts we made in this direction would probably result in the Asiatics feeling that we were trying to use them in our efforts to get at China rather than that we had a general interest in supporting their independence.

6. Reference was made to the Cabinet meeting this morning and a question which arose there as to whether we could not stake out a line

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[4] For documentation on this subject, see volume XII.

which if the Communists crossed would result in war.[5] The difficulty in staking out such a line, with the Communists operating through subversion from within, was discussed. The Secretary said he had been turning over in his mind the possibility of negotiating security treaties in the immediate future with Formosa and Thailand. These treaties would in a sense stake out a position with respect to these two countries. Mr. Allen Dulles indicated that he thought this possibility was worth considering.

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[5] The minutes of the Cabinet meeting of May 14 read in part as follows:

"*Indo-China*—Sec. Dulles commented on the difficulty of preventing complete collapse in Indo-China in the face of French and English attitudes and situations. He believed the future of Indo-China would depend on the outcome of French negotiations at Geneva in the immediate future. He expressed some optimism over the increasing awareness by some Asiatic countries of the impending danger.

"The President reported a suggestion that he make a national broadcast to clarify the people's understanding of the situation in Indo-China and he requested Sec. Dulles' comments on its desirability. Mr. Dulles believed such a broadcast might be best accomplished in about a week, after more can be known about the intent of our Allies.

"Sec. Weeks inquired about the possible parallel between the situation in Indo-China and the international developments of the 1930's. Sec. Dulles discussed some of the difficulties of 'drawing a line', particularly the differentiation made by foreign nations between overt aggression and internal subversion." (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file)

Sinclair Weeks was Secretary of Commerce.

751G.00/5-1454

Memorandum by the Acting Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Day) to the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Drumright)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 14, 1954.

Subject: Situation in Viet-Nam

Our present information indicates deterioration of the political strength of the Bao Dai regime in Viet-Nam. This seems to be more pronounced in the south than in the north.

The main causes of this seem to be the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the apprehension produced by the evident reluctance of French public opinion to support continuance of the French military effort in defense of the territory and lawful Government of Vietnam, and the negotiations at Geneva which may be heading for a cease-fire that will permit the Viet Minh to take over Viet-Nam. Nothing can be done about Dien Bien Phu beyond helping the wounded and placing the defeat in perspective. Its loss alone does not mean that the military situation cannot be retrieved. It should be possible to make clear to French opinion that the large number of French military and civilian nationals in Viet-Nam and the extent to which French prestige and material interests are engaged make it impossible to give up the fight all at once and hastily withdraw unless the French are prepared to tolerate a complete debacle which will virtually ruin France's prestige and position as a great power and will produce repercussions in North Africa harmful to the unity and strength of the free world. The negotiations at Geneva have left us close to the position of having to choose one of the following alternatives: (1) Abandoning support of France at Geneva; (2) agreeing to proposals which are likely to hand Viet-Nam over to the Communists; (3) breaking off the negotiations at Geneva on Indochina with French consent and either continuing the struggle with minimum help from France or drawing a line of defense which will leave Viet-Nam (or at least Northern Viet-Nam) in the hands of the Viet Minh and Laos and Cambodia at the mercy of the Viet Minh.

I am out of touch with high level political thinking on this problem but feel that I should give you my views after studying recent reports. These are that we should follow up Laniel and De Jean's suggestions for a re-examination of the framework of our common effort with France in Indochina and seek to raise French will and determination up to the point at which France will be prepared to pursue vigorously the military measures which are necessary to consolidate the French and Vietnamese position in the Tonkin delta. If we are successful in persuading the French to do this we should be prepared to extend the fullest support short of involvement of American troops in combat to replace French troops, there is a good chance that a much stronger position can be quickly attained. Our present information suggests that we must achieve this by next October if the delta is to be held.

If the French are unwilling to pursue the military effort necessary to consolidate the position in the Delta, it would seem desirable to secure British and French consent to ending the Indochina discussions at the Geneva Conference as soon as possible. I think we should be prepared to take the matter to the UN.

In view of the unlikelihood of getting rapid action in the UN we should make plans to assist, if necessary, in removing French nationals from the Delta (as the NSC policy requires) and concert measures for air and naval action to retain the Tonkin delta at the same time that we vigorously pursue consultations directed toward strengthening the prospects of combined military action to defend the rest of Southeast Asia and political action to secure maximum support for all military measures that we find it necessary to take either alone or in conjunction with our allies.

In the absence of participation of Asian allies in a military operation under the aegis of the UN and at the request of the Associated States Governments I think it would be a tragic mistake to send American ground troops into the Tonkin delta. I am sure we would take over all the problems which the French military have had with the risk of even greater opposition among the Vietnamese population. We would become embroiled, like the French are now, in a prolonged inconclusive political and military struggle from which it would be ever more difficult to emerge with either victory or honor. I believe also that if we act alone in this the policies and attitudes of governments and opinion in south and southeast Asia will shift from neutrality to opposition or hostility towards the US based on fear and a determination to prevent the US from gaining a foothold in the area which they think would enable it to expand its influence to ultimate political domination.

In covering causes of political disunity in Viet-Nam I have omitted reference to possible dissatisfaction with corruption which Bao Dai condones or from which he profits. This factor is not new and seems likely to be unchangeable if Bao Dai must remain chief of state. Perhaps we should re-examine the necessity of this.

751G.00/5–1454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 14, 1954—10 p. m.
[Received 6:39 p. m.]

4383. Repeated information niact Geneva 237. Limit distribution. Eyes only Under Secretary. I saw Laniel and Schumann this evening regarding Deptel 4023.[1] Before discussion started on reftel, Laniel made a number of observations and asked two additional questions. He said that he was sending General Ely to Indochina immediately. He will leave on Saturday [2] or Sunday and will stay in Indochina only two to four days. Purpose of his visit is to check up on military situation on the spot and on physical and mental condition of General Navarre. Because of Ely's prospective absence from Paris, Laniel suggested that General Trapnell, or whoever else we plan to send to Paris in answer to Laniel's request for American military advice, arrive approximately Thursday of next week. General Ely will undertake such re-grouping of French forces and shortening of lines as may be necessary. This will probably include withdrawal of portion, and maybe large portion, of the French forces now in Laos. Final decisions, however, will only be taken upon return of General Ely to Paris.

Laniel then posed following two questions: One, could the United States find a way to guarantee the borders and the independence of Laos and Cambodia. If such a guarantee could be made, he felt it would be of great help after the French forces had been withdrawn. Laniel's second question dealt with action United States will take in the case of intervention by MIG 15's aircraft. He said that for his own protection here he would like definite assurance, written if possible, that U.S. aviation would come instantly to the help of French forces in delta if they were attacked by MIG's. He said that he would have no defense before parliament or French public opinion if he was not able to obtain some such assurance as there were no adequate antiaircraft defenses in the delta.

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[1] Dated May 11, p. 1534.
[2] May 15.

Finally, Maurice Schumann transmitted a request of Bidault's that U.S. do everything possible in the next days to accelerate delivery of planes and equipment in the event that a cease fire should be negotiated at Geneva which would naturally bring to a halt such deliveries.

I then referred to question of location of negotiations and expressed Dept's views in favor of Paris. Schumann and Laniel agreed that Paris would be preferable to Washington and accordingly it can be accepted as agreed that negotiations along lines of reftel will continue to take place in Paris.

I then outlined requirements listed in paragraphs 2 and 3 of reftel. Laniel and Schumann listened very quietly and seriously and on the whole appeared well pleased with this clarification of U.S. position. They said that naturally they did not have any info regarding the views of other countries in the area and they would appreciate being kept informed by U.S. of progress toward fulfilling condition indicated in paragraph 2(*b*) which was beyond their control. They were particularly impressed and pleased by indication in that paragraph that actual participation by U.K. was no longer a prerequisite to U.S. action.

Laniel and Schumann had one serious objection to U.S. conditions. This, as expected, was to the condition that France publicly accord to Associated States right of withdrawal from French Union at any time. When I explained U.S. reasons for this position as outlined in Deptel 4064,[3] they said they could see how such a statement might be of some help with Nehru but that French public opinion would never understand why it was necessary to make such a statement when it had never been requested by any of the three Associated States. They then pointed out the fact that the Viet Minh armistice proposals, dishonest though they were, nevertheless looked toward the possibility of the Viet Minh joining the French Union. (*Comment:* I am certain that unless we can find some way to get around this requirement, French will never ask for outside assistance.) After hearing strong statement on the subject by both Laniel and Schumann, I said that I hoped we could continue conversations on this subject in order to find a formula that would satisfy U.S. requirements and at the same time could be accepted by the French parliament. Laniel and Schumann agreed that we should talk further on this subject.

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[3] Dated May 13, p. 1554.

Laniel and Schumann had one other question referring to subparagraph 2(*e*) which states that forces from U.S. would be principally air and sea "and others". They asked me to find out what was meant by other forces. Laniel indicated that it would be very important to have artillery forces as well as some ground forces. In this connection, they mentioned the possibility of the use of Marines. (*Comment:* I feel that while French Govt would not look forward in present circumstances to the necessity of any substantial involvement by U.S. ground forces, they nevertheless feel that it is very important that we provide at least some token ground forces so that our participation is not limited strictly to naval and air forces.)

Both Laniel and Schumann accepted without question as being wholly justified U.S. requirement that conditions be accepted by French Cabinet and endorsed by National Assembly. They then said that they would probably want to speak to me over the weekend after they had had time to think further regarding U.S. conditions. I made it clear that conditions as outlined represented present high level thinking in Washington and did not represent as yet any commitment on the part of U.S. Govt. Schumann then said that negotiations should be pursued in the greatest secrecy until such time as full agreement had been reached. He said that premature press leaks could make things most difficult and he referred to an AP press story today from Washington. Laniel and Schumann then said that they hoped that negotiations could continue rapidly and that when and if full agreement had been reached, we would be in a position to make public declaration of a sort which would influence Communist negotiators at Geneva.

DILLON

751G.00/5–1354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consulate at Hanoi[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, May 14, 1954—7:40 p. m.

633. Ref Hanoi 660 and Saigon 2389.[2] Please inform Governor Tri his views have been transmitted Department which appreciates his frankness and values his judgments. We look upon steadfastness shown by him and his administration as a most important element of stability in present circumstances.

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[1] Drafted by Sturm (PSA). Also sent to Saigon as telegram 2307; repeated for information to Geneva as Tosec 166, Paris as telegram 4090, and to Bangkok by pouch.

[2] Both dated May 13, pp. 1550 and 1559, respectively.

Department assumes Saigon has passed Secretary's press comments to Hanoi. These should clarify US position.

Omission of Indochina from itineraries of Wilson, Hull and Van Fleet does not in any way betoken flagging of interest on our part, nor does it justify press speculation that US is "writing off Indochina". You may explain that travel plans were dictated by purely practical considerations, including tight schedules and the fact that missions related primarily to Korean matters. Moreover officials in Vietnam are absorbed by pressing tasks and officials of this Government would be reluctant add to their burdens.

Hanoi and Saigon should, at their discretion, impress on local authorities both Vietnamese and French that US has not abandoned Indochina. We do not feel that our continued aid is being given to bolster a lost cause. We understand how keenly fall of Dien Bien Phu has been felt, and how unsettling is urgent search for solutions to new problems which press upon our friends and allies in Indochina.

Department hopes you will find occasion point out that among steps recently taken US has authorized supply of additional arms to equip militia in North Vietnam (Army Message MG 1139A, May 6),[3] and we have just completed air lift of over 1,000 additional French Union troops to Vietnam, and, more importantly, we are defending at Geneva peoples and territories of Associated States. We believe these actions, among others cannot be represented as being those of a government which has "written off" Indochina.[4]

DULLES

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[3] Not found in Department of State files.

[4] In telegram 667 from Hanoi, May 17, Cameron reported that he had briefed Tri the previous afternoon on the basis of the present telegram. Tri had expressed his appreciation. (751G.00/5–1754)

751G.00/5–1454 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, May 15, 1954—12:38 p. m.

4094. Eyes only for Ambassador from Secretary. Reur 4383.[2]

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State. Repeated for information to Geneva as Tedul 73, eyes only for the Under Secretary. According to a memorandum by MacArthur to Bowie, May 15, this telegram was drafted as a result of a meeting at the White House that morning. (PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Gullion") The log of the President's daily appointments indicates that Secretary Dulles, MacArthur, and Admiral Radford had an off-the-record breakfast meeting with the President at 7:45 a. m. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments") The Dulles appointment book confirms the occurrence of the White House session and further indicates that Dulles, MacArthur, and Radford met again at 8:35 a.m., presumably at the State Department. (Princeton University, Dulles papers, "Daily Appointments") No records of these meetings have been found.

[2] Dated May 14, p. 1566.

1. Trapnell's trip delayed as requested. However, we are inclined to question desirability of sending him next week in light of Ely's trip. Request your recommendation.

2. We know no way to guarantee borders and independence of Laos and Cambodia. From military standpoint such guarantee would be impractical. From legal standpoint the processes requiring Senate action would be too complicated to affect present situation. Believe best course regarding Laos and Cambodia is to have them join with Thailand in seeking UN Peace Observation Commission. This would carry at least certain moral implications if the move was strongly backed by US and other powers.

3. If collective defense arranged as contemplated, this would of course embrace situation resulting from intervention by MIGs. If such intervention should occur prior to conclusion of collective defense arrangements, then the US reaction would have to be judged under circumstances of the moment, but in any case President would expect to make his action dependent upon Congressional authorization, assuming US interests not directly attacked. However, Defense advises that their intelligence does not indicate that Chinese airfield situation is such as to make such intervention seem likely.

4. Our normal processes of delivery of planes and equipment are proceeding and do not plan any interruption. We must be vigilant to prevent what in effect would be turning over equipment to the enemy. It is of course absolutely indispensable that any French cease fire or armistice negotiations should protect the right of the US to repossess itself of the planes and equipment which it has delivered for purposes of fighting Communists under agreements which give us the right to recapture if this use no longer contemplated.

5. Note acceptance Paris as place of negotiations.

6. Respecting conditions named our 4023,[3] would like your suggestion regarding condition 2(*d*). We believe there might be some flexibility on our side regarding formulation but there cannot be any equivocation on completeness of independence if we are to get Philippines and Thailand to associate themselves. Without them, whole arrangement would collapse because we are not prepared to intervene purely as part of a white Western coalition which is shunned by all Asian states.

7. The phrase "and others" was designed to refer to other forces than those of US and France. The formula "principally air and sea" was not designed to exclude anti-aircraft artillery, and limited US ground forces for protection of bases which might be used by US naval and air forces.

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[3] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

8. Will do best respecting secrecy. The press report referred to almost certainly came from French Embassy. Suggest Laniel that Fr Emb Wash be instructed to exercise utmost discretion re these negotiations.

9. FYI, we believe as suggested your last sentence principal French motivation is to use US position to get better terms at Geneva. We have no objection to this, provided action is consistent with the principles which we think necessary and have reported to Under Secretary at Geneva as essential to avoid thinly disguised capitulation. We would expect if the French and ourselves are working together to create collective defense of the area, we should also work closely at Geneva and the French Delegation would not agree at Geneva to terms which we felt involved virtual abandonment of area to Communist forces. Certainly we should have full opportunity to know what was going on and have timely opportunity to express our views, and if they are ignored, publicly to disassociate ourselves.

10. Re final sentence para. 6, Tedul 54,[4] we consider Laniel's comments in Paris 4383 as preliminary observations and not as constituting formal request for opening discussions. Therefore we will not consult with UK and possibly others until we hear results of your further talk with Laniel over weekend. We assume that French will talk to no one but you at this juncture.

11. We are also not clear how Laniel proposes to handle this question procedurally with Cabinet and Parliament and would appreciate your own comment on this. We ourselves would have to have consultations with Congressional leadership if we reach agreement in principle with the French prior to presentation by Laniel to French Cabinet which will most certainly leak.

DULLES

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[4] Telegram 4023 to Paris, May 11, was repeated to Geneva as Tedul 54.

751G.00/5-1554 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India[1]

CONFIDENTIAL WASHINGTON, May 15, 1954—12 : 52 p. m.

1314. Murphy discussed Indochina with Indian Ambassador May 13.[2] With reference press reports of recent meetings five powers

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[1] Drafted by Williams of SOA. Repeated for information to Geneva as Tosec 171.

[2] Deputy Under Secretary Murphy also discussed Indochina with the Ambassador of Pakistan on May 14. The conversation was summarized in telegram 989 to Karachi, May 17. (751G.00/5-1754)

(US, UK, France, Australia, New Zealand) to discuss South East Asia with special attention Indochina, said no such meetings have been held. US obviously not interested limiting its consultations re Indochina to that group; neighboring countries vitally concerned and no intention try decide destiny South East Asia without reference to area governments. A military staff group at Singapore has met from time to time and believed press had drawn incorrect inferences. Said Secretary plans to pursue idea of a grouping for united action or united attitude of countries who are concerned by situation South East Asia and by spread communism. Then turned to charges at Geneva of US support of colonialism and reviewed US record mentioning Philippines, Indonesia, and Korea. Pointed out however that US is associated with other countries in a world situation; our primary interest has been to stem flow of communism but we aware of local political overtones. Said France had come long way rectifying situation as it concerned Indochinese independence.

Mehta then reviewed statement on Indochina issued Colombo Prime Ministers Conference.[3] Said he frequently asked if India would be prepared play part in some security agreement. Said, assuming complete independence Associated States, if both sides agreed, India thought it could help, India was prepared to help. Wanted to know how we envisaged a settlement.

Murphy said that a settlement was basically for France and Associated States work out. Cited complexities making Indochina different more difficult than Korea. Thought Vietnamese did not favor partition and Eden's idea did not appeal to Vietnamese on either side. On other hand coalition would lead to Communist domination which unacceptable. Apart from military victory no quick or happy solution.

Mehta said independence had to be translated into concrete terms. There would have to be a transition period which Asian states might supervise under UN.

Murphy said trouble with simple cease fire and then negotiations for settlement was that we did not have faith in Communists. It was desirable, as for example in Korean case, to agree in advance on machinery for safeguarding settlement or armistice. Replying question said we favored something generally along lines French proposal at Geneva.

Mehta referred colonial aspects Indochina saying Asia viewed it as predominately colonial war. Ho Chi Minh was symbol national resistance. If as enlightened as US, British or Dutch, French would have transferred power long before and avoided present dilemma. He believed Ho would win elections or come to power after them. Said he knew US has been privately pressing French for settlement but this not known by public who only see US supplying money and arms for fighting nationalists. This disillusioning to Asians who recall US support for independence Asian countries. Murphy said we understood Asiatic sentiment but pointed out that three Associated States had steadily advanced toward independence.

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[3] See footnote 2, p. 1344.

DULLES

751G.00/5-1554 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 15, 1954—6 p. m.

2414. Repeated information Paris 853, Geneva 117. I had a talk today with General Navarre. He said that intelligence thus far has not revealed any move by Viet Minh in direction of Luang Prabang, although he did not exclude possibility of a thrust in that direction. He thought General Giap would bring his forces from Dien Bien Phu to attack delta. This impression was strengthened by Viet Minh maneuver to barter welfare of wounded at Dien Bien Phu against immunity from aerial bombardment on RC-41.

Navarre said he expected General Ely to come out to Saigon within next few days. He repeated his by now familiar theme on need to internationalize war and questioned me closely as to attitude of Congress, effect of elections in November, and when next new Congress would convene. I took occasion to point out that possibly Congressional opinion might be affected by fact that in Korean war United States troops were draftees, but thus far no one had observed movement on part of French Parliament to permit conscripts to serve in this theatre. I added Secretary Dulles was the Allied Statesman who was doing the most at present to try to work out united policy for action. Navarre said that if in fact any concrete intervention were contemplated, our capacity and will so to intervene should be made unmistakably clear to enemy.

Navarre's mood is very bitter and he is seeking, as I have predicted, to find pretext to thrust blame on Americans for what happens in Indochina. Admiral Auboyneau, Chief of French Naval Force Far East, whom I met later today, was also most exercised at article in current issue *Time* magazine indicating United States had mistakenly assumed France was a great power. I told Auboyneau that I would paraphrase Voltaire: "If France did not exist, God would have to create her."

MCCLINTOCK

751G.00/5–1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, May 17, 1954—2 p. m.
[Received 10:30 a. m.]

4402. Repeated information Geneva 243. Department limit distribution; Geneva eyes only Under Secretary. Re Deptel 4023, paragraph 2*d*.[1] I would like to propose for consideration a radically different approach to the clarification of the full independence of the Associated States, and in particular of Vietnam. The establishment of the right of withdrawal from the French Union seems to me to be a purely juridical approach, which does not go to the roots of the problem. It is also unacceptable to French opinion for a large number of reasons, among which are (1) that it throws into question the entire concept of the French Union as a union of free and independent peoples, and (2) it casts doubt on the veracity and honor of France in her recent statements that Vietnam has now been granted full independence and, subsequent to the granting of that independence, has chosen to retain membership in the French Union.

The real problem to me seems to be how to establish in US and Asian opinion the fact that the Associated States have, or will have, a similar degree of independence to that possessed by Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. I consider that the two basic treaties recently negotiated between France and Vietnam (*a*) granting full independence, and (*b*) establishing Vietnam's membership in French Union do establish this type of independence for Vietnam. However, the situation is obscured and complicated by the following factors:

1. The presence on Vietnamese soil of a large French expeditionary corps.
2. The existence of a state of war requiring a French commander as supreme military commander in Vietnam.
3. The absence of a truly powerful Vietnamese national army.

The present situation in Indochina is in some ways comparable to that during the darkest early hours of the Korean war, when there was treachery and disaffection on all sides in South Korea, when the lines were being held primarily by American troops, and when a large part of world opinion regarded the South Korean Government as a US puppet. The real independence of the South Korean Government only became fully apparent when South Korea came into possession of an army of its own capable of independent action. I feel that independence of Vietnam will become perfectly clear after a strong national army has been created and after the bulk, if not all, of the French Expeditionary Corps has been withdrawn.

I would assume that the agreement which we will require regarding training of troops would give the US primary responsibility for the training and equipping of a Vietnamese national army. There has in the past been doubt as to the ability and good faith of the French military command in this direction. An agreement giving this responsibility to the US should remove these doubts and do more than anything else to make clear the independence of Vietnam. In addition, I would think it possible for the French to make some sort of statement saying that after peace had been established, and a Vietnamese national army had been established, it was their intention to withdraw the Expeditionary Corps. In this connection, the base rights which the French have in Laos by virtue of the recently negotiated Franco-Laotian treaty, and those which they expect to acquire in Vietnam by virtue of military conventions now under negotiation in Paris, even if they should be maintained, are of no more importance, and probably of less importance, than US base rights in the Philippine Republic. Such a statement would be in accordance with general desire in France to withdraw troops from Indochina and should be useful as assurance to Chinese Communists that non-Asian troops were being withdrawn from proximity to her frontiers.

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[1] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

When and if peace is restored in Indochina and Vietnam has a strong national army, it is obvious that the fundamental ties between Vietnam and France will be cultural, i.e., language, and whatever financial self interest there may remain. Vietnam's association with the French Union will be based on a treaty freely negotiated between Sovereign States, and it is obvious that if Vietnam so desires, it will then be in a position to abrogate or nullify this treaty at any time it so desires. A public statement by Bao Dai that Vietnam's association with the French Union is the result of the free desire of the Vietnamese people might be helpful.

If this picture can be presented in clear terms, which presentation will in considerable measure be a US responsibility, I should think that the independence of the Associated States would be fully clarified in US opinion and in the opinion of friendly Asian states. I would appreciate receiving Department's comments on this type of approach prior to discussing it with the French.

DILLON

396.1 GE/5–1754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, May 17, 1954—7 : 37 p. m.

4117. Personal for Ambassador from Secretary. In your discussions with Laniel please bear in mind following two points:

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State. Repeated to Geneva as Tedul 78, for the information of Under Secretary Smith.

1. The practicability of US intervention is constantly subject to consideration in the light of day to day developments. If the French want to use possibility of our intervention primarily as a card to play at Geneva, it would seem to follow that they would not want to make a decision inviting our intervention until the Geneva game is played out. However, this is likely to be a long game particularly as the Communists may well be deliberately dragging it out so as to permit their creating a *fait accompli* before Geneva ends. It should not be assumed that if this happens, the present US position regarding intervention would necessarily exist after the Communists have succeeded in this maneuver.

2. The second point to bear in mind is that while we are anxious to bolster up the French position, we must also be on our guard lest Laniel is creating an alibi and he, or his successor, will in the end tell the French people that they had to capitulate because US terms were so rigorous that they were obviously unacceptable and that therefore US is to blame.

DULLES

751G.00/5–1754 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 17, 1954—2 p. m.
[Received 10:10 p. m.]

2419. Repeated information Hanoi 462, priority Paris 856, Geneva 120. Re third paragraph Tosec 158, repeated Paris 4074, Saigon 2300, Hanoi 630.[1] Although as my telegrams have indicated immediate return of Bao Dai is measure most urged by local leaders such as Tri, Quat, Hinh, and DeJean, we should not assume that this will be an automatic salvation. If Bao Dai does come back, we shall have to keep him in Saigon and put him to work. He must not be permitted to relapse into his comfortable habits of big game shooting, conspiracy from such vantage points as Banmethuot and Dalat. A *sine qua non* is that Nguyen De not return.

If Bao Dai does not come back, I recommend that French and we place utmost pressure on local elements, it being recalled that most of this valorous Vietnamese Government is safely in Paris, to depose Bao Dai and establish a Council of Regency with a new government operating on a streamlined constitution which would have real powers. I would suggest as members of Regency Council Buu Loc, who would thus give a flavor of legitimacy to this group, Tran Van Huu as an elderly and well-known Cochin Chinese, and Bishop Le Huu Tu or Ngo Dinh Diem, who would combine support of Catholic elements as well as of Tonkinese.

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[1] For text of telegram Tosec 158 to Geneva, May 14, concerning the situation in Vietnam and the possible role of Bao Dai, see vol. XVI, p. 800. Paragraph three read as follows:

"We are of course aware however of uncertainty as to what role Bao Dai could or would play under existing circumstances. Nevertheless Bao Dai's return to Vietnam is the one remedial measure we might put into effect most quickly. If Bidault and USDel concur, and if Bao Dai does not respond affirmatively to first suggestion, might be put up to Bao Dai that unless he is willing accept our recommendation, French and US policy with regard to him and his regime will have to be reexamined."

Government would be entrusted to Governor Tri of North Vietnam, who as Hanoi telegram 660 to Department, repeated Saigon 580, Paris 304,[2] has most recently suggested has definite administrative capacity and has shown his ability under trying circumstances to maintain morale and good government in Tonkin. Streamlined constitution emanating from Regents would provide that all appointments such as governors and prefects of cities would come from Cabinet and not from Regency Council. Regents would in fact be figureheads and we would write their constitution. I would continue Quat as Minister of National Defense which would mean elimination of Hinh for time being. Tam might be offered Ministry of Interior.

Hinh would be invited to US to consult as to possibilities of training Vietnamese national army by US means and to investigate possibility of direct military aid. We would keep Hinh indefinitely in US as he is still a valuable asset and we might need him at a later date. Other members of Cabinet should appropriately be chosen by Tri, but we should not forget Pham Van Huyen (Embtel 2318, repeated Paris 807, Hanoi 436).[3]

Arrangement outlined above would have additional advantage of indicating clearly to Viet Minh that we do not contemplate partition of Vietnam and that we repose confidence in Tonkinese as well as in other elements of this country. Such a measure should in my estimation strengthen our hand at Geneva. To objection that this program is injurious to theory of sovereignty I would reply that Vietnamese will be far worse off under government presided over by Ho Chi Minh and that in case of bankruptcy which we now confront, bankers have right to organize a receivership.[4]

McClintock

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[2] Dated May 13, p. 1550.

[3] In telegram 2318 from Saigon, May 10, not printed, the Embassy reported that Pham Van Huyen, the Vietnamese Minister of Labor, had expressed his total disillusionment with the corrupt and unrepresentative nature of the Vietnamese Government. Pham had said that there were thoughts of establishing a revolutionary government. (751G.00/5-1054)

[4] In telegram Secto 260 from Geneva, May 20, repeated to Saigon and Paris, the U.S. Delegation reported that Ambassador Heath felt that the United States must bear with the Bao Dai solution at least for the time being. For text of Secto 260, see vol. xvi, p. 857.

611.51H/5-1754

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 17, 1954.

Subject: Possible Appointment of Ambassador to Cambodia and Minister to Laos

General Smith from Geneva has suggested that it may be helpful at some stage in the Geneva Conference to announce U.S. intentions of appointing an American Ambassador in Cambodia and an American Minister in Laos. He suggests that necessary arrangements be made without publicity so that a decision, when and if it is taken, can be readily implemented.

I believe an expansion of our diplomatic representation in Cambodia and Laos, and an announcement to that effect, would have a salutary effect if it were undertaken as a part of a coordinated plan to help those nations defend themselves against Communist aggression. This step would tend to underline our recognition of the independence of the Associated States, and the importance we attach to that independence. It would be both futile and embarrassing to announce our intention to name new Chiefs of Mission to these posts unless and until we have determined upon a course of action directed to assure that Laos and Cambodia will be adequately defended.

I recommend that you authorize the appointment of Chiefs of Diplomatic Mission to Cambodia and Laos and the announcement thereof once this move would be part of a coordinated program with regard to defending these states. The final decision can be taken only in the light of subsequent political and military developments, but we should be prepared to move quickly if this course seems desirable.

If you do agree that such a move would be desirable, I will make recommendations to you as to persons who might appropriately fill these posts and will consult with you further regarding the decision to proceed with authorizing General Smith to make an appropriate announcement at Geneva.[2]

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Sturm of PSA and Fisher of WE.

[2] By memorandum of May 18, the President responded as follows:

"I agreed with your idea that:

"(*a*) If we are to expand our diplomatic representation in Cambodia and Laos, it should be done as part of a broader program of assistance to those nations—rendered under conditions which have been generally described both in your public statements and my own.

"(*b*) I think that we should now take all necessary preliminary steps so that in the event we decided to take such expansion we can do it without delay." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina")

751G.00/5–1854 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 18, 1954—noon.

2443. Repeated information Paris 863, London 67, Moscow 8, Geneva 128. Secto 197, repeated Paris 254, London 159, Saigon 64, Moscow 68,[1] suggests that Vietnamese armistice proposals will be quite unacceptable to other side. I wonder if this is a safe conclusion. Essence of Vietnamese proposals as set out Secto 190, repeated London 154, Paris 247, Saigon 61,[2] is recognition of principle that only state qualified legally to represent Vietnam is state personified by His Majesty Bao Dai and recognition of principle of single army in entire territory placed under direction and responsibility of State of Vietnam. Accordingly, Viet Minh soldiers are to be incorporated in Vietnamese National Army.

Bao Dai was once supreme counselor to Ho Chi-minh and he might possibly be willing contemplate a settlement along lines proposed which would in fact result in Ho Chi-minh taking over this country under aegis of His Majesty. So-called principle for incorporation of Viet Minh troops into Vietnamese National Army in light of parlous state of morale that army and its utter lack of cadres could only lead, in my judgment, to turning present Vietnamese National Army into a Viet Minh army, irrespective of by what name it might be called.[3]

McCLINTOCK

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[1] For text of telegram Secto 197 from Geneva, May 13, see vol. XVI, p. 789.

[2] Telegram Secto 190 from Geneva, May 12, contained the text of the Vietnamese proposals presented at the Third Plenary Session on Indochina. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 256) The proposals are documented in vol. XVI, pp. 783 ff.

[3] McClintock further discussed the possibility of an accommodation between the Vietnamese Government and the Viet Minh in telegram 2446 from Saigon, May 18. (751G.00/5–1854)

751G.00/5–1854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, May 18, 1954—1 p. m.

4424. Repeated information Geneva 252. For the Secretary. Limit distribution. Reference: Department's telegram 4117.[1] Regarding paragraph 1 reference telegram I feel certain for reasons mentioned Embassy telegram 4416 [2] that French wish to use possibility of our intervention primarily to strengthen their hand at Geneva. For this reason they definitely hope that at the proper time, which would probably be promptly after completion of negotiations, a public announcement could be made indicating our willingness to consider military intervention should the French request it. Thus, I think we should envisage course of events from French point of view as having three stages, namely:

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[1] Dated May 17, p. 1575.

1. Completion of negotiations.
2. Some sort of public announcement.[3]
3. Actual request for intervention.

Request for intervention would only be made if step 2 did not produce hoped for result at Geneva. This procedure seems slightly different to me from conception in paragraph 1 of reference telegram, which seems contemplate only two stages, completion of negotiations, followed by a request for US intervention.

In my next conversation with French I will make clear that US position regarding intervention will have to be based on conditions existing at the time.

Regarding paragraph 2 of reference telegram, I have been very conscious and concerned about this danger. This is one of the main reasons why I feel so strongly that we should attempt to find a new formula to replace right of withdrawal from French Union, which would certainly be considered here as posing terms so rigorous as to be obviously unacceptable.

DILLON

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[2] Telegram 4416 from Paris, May 17, has not been found in Department of State files. It apparently concerned a French initiative regarding the possible use of United States forces in Indochina. Telegram 4152 to Paris for the eyes of Ambassador Dillon only (repeated to Geneva as Tedul 89), May 19, read as follows: "FYI only. Pending outcome current discussions NSC we are unable provide reply to Schumann's request (Embtel 4416) re limited commitment American ground troops." (751G.5/5–1954) See also telegram 4194 to Paris, May 21, p. 1594.

[3] Telegram 4212 to Paris, May 21, drafted by Secretary Dulles and repeated to Geneva as Tosec 235, read as follows:

"Point 2 Your 4424. We doubt desirability of any public announcement at the time you suggest. We believe that the effect on Geneva will be at maximum without any formal public announcement which would have to be so carefully hedged and conditioned to avoid any appearance of moral commitment of US, particularly in advance of commitment of other powers, that the effect would be negative rather than positive." (751G.00/5–1854)

751G.00/5–1854: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, May 18, 1954—2 p. m.

4426. Sent Saigon 536 repeated information Geneva 253 Department 4426. Ranking official secretariat relations Associated States informs us that request for piastre transfers to francs on part of Vietnamese officials particularly in Bao Dai's immediate entourage have grown precipitously in recent days. Requests are camouflaged as "expense" (in vastly excessive amounts) for negotiating delegation or, on the part of one cabinet minister, as required to purchase property in France for "retirement".

Although not surprised French deplore this evidence of Vietnamese "patriots" leaving sinking ship.

DILLON

S/S–NSC files, lot 63 D 351, NSC 5421 Series

Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, May 18, 1954.

Subject: Studies with Respect to Possible U.S. Action Regarding Indochina.

1. The President has authorized that requests be made of various departments and agencies to prepare, with the highest urgency and secrecy for submission to the National Security Council, appropriate studies on the assumption that United States armed forces intervene in the conflict in Indochina, and on the alternate assumptions that the Chinese Communists:

a. Intervene with armed forces in Indochina; or
b. Do not intervene with armed forces in Indochina.

2. Accordingly, it is requested that the Department of State, in cooperation with other interested departments and agencies, prepare for submission to the National Security Council not later than Tuesday, May 25, the following studies under the above assumptions, including the alternate assumptions stated in 1–*a* and *b* above:[1]

a. Economic Warfare Studies

(1) Plan for keeping China out of war or reducing its effectiveness by economic warfare means.
(2) Plan of economic warfare campaign against Viet Minh.
(3) Plan for economic warfare organization as integral part of intervention.

b. United Nations Consultation

(1) Possible types of UN action.
(2) Relation of UN action to "united action".

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[1] The studies prepared by the Department of State pursuant to this memorandum were included in NSC 5421, "Studies With Respect to Possible U.S. Action Regarding Indochina," June 1, 1954, a collection consisting of studies prepared by various government agencies. For an extract from NSC 5421, including its table of contents, see p. 1649.

c. Juridical Relationship in French Union

(1) How to give best effect to promise of full independence for Associated States.

d. Draft of President's Message

3. Attention is invited to the necessity for preparing these studies under the highest security safeguards, including restriction of participation in and knowledge of such studies to the minimum number of individuals with a "need-to-know".

JAMES S. LAY, JR.

751G.00/5–1954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 19, 1954—1 p. m.

2468. Repeated information Paris 873, Geneva 134. Last night General O'Daniel and I had a conference with General Ely and DeJean at request of French. Topic was what US could do to train Vietnamese and Cambodian national armies.

O'Daniel set forth his concept of training by American advisors who, as in Korea, would be attached to battalion, regimental and divisional native commanders and laid great stress on need to reorganize Vietnamese and Cambodian armies in divisions, not battalions. He felt that if his strategic concept met with acceptance, Vietnam by October could have an army of perhaps nine divisions which would start in south, and as this army moved north it would gain experience in combat, eventually reaching delta as a battle hardened force. O'Daniel said he had just returned yesterday from visit to officers training school in Cambodia, and talked to Defense Minister Tioulong, and felt that in Cambodia army of three divisions would be created by autumn.

General Ely said that he accepted concept of US training for Vietnamese national army. He likewise agreed that US military advisors should be placed in Vietnamese units. He said, "The sooner you get into this war, the better we will like it." However, Ely did not give open assent to O'Daniel's insistence on divisional formation, and he emphasized strongly necessity of unity of command which would remain in French hands. There would be no US participation in operational planning.

I said that acceptance on one hand of US advisors and on other hand to insist there be no US participation in planning might lead to anomalous situation, as in actual fact, particularly under combat conditions, US officers attached to Vietnamese battalions, regiments and divisions might be compelled to offer advice which would amount to operational decisions. Ely admitted that this might prove to be case, but felt, so long as top command was French, arrangement could be worked out in field.

It was agreed that second meeting will be held May 21 upon Ely's return from Tonkin. He and O'Daniel will agree on text expressing their understanding and Ely will submit this draft for approval to his government, O'Daniel at same time submitting text for approval of Defense Secretary Wilson in Manila.

It is a pleasure to report this morning DeJean said General Ely had been most favorably impressed by General O'Daniel's obvious sincerity and singleness of purpose.

McClintock

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President"

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[Extract]

TOP SECRET [Washington,] May 19, 1954.

Memorandum of Conversation With the President

. . . .

Indochina

With respect to Indochina, I reviewed with the President the recent cables. I said that matters were somewhat in suspense pending the return of General Ely from Indochina. I referred to the French position, as indicated in Dillon's 4416,[1] particularly on Marines. The President said he would not necessarily exclude sending some Marines if we went in. He was, however, very emphatic that we must adhere to the position of not going in alone. There would have to be some regional association. I said that this was the position that we were closely adhering to, as indicated in the basic cable of conditions which had been sent to Dillon.[2] I reminded him that this did not make U.K. active participation a necessary condition, which the President agreed to. He emphasized, however, the indispensability also of Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand, and of course, the Associated States.

I mentioned to the President the cable from Bedell Smith (Dulte 84)[3] with reference to five-power military talks at Washington. The President concurred in Smith's suggestion that the British could report informally to the Colombo powers as they proposed leaving us to inform Thailand and the Philippines as we deemed best.

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[1] See footnote 2, p. 1580.

[2] See telegram 4023 to Paris, May 11, p. 1534.

[3] For text of telegram Dulte 84 from Geneva, May 18, containing British draft terms of reference for five-power military staff talks, see volume XII.

I told the President that I felt grave concern at the results of the dilatory tactics being pursued by the U.K., and particularly their unwillingness to have political talks with the countries of the area or to reach any decisions on area defense until after the results of Geneva were known. I said that this enabled the Communists by delaying tactics at Geneva to prevent any action on our part until they had in effect consolidated their position throughout Indochina. I mentioned in this connection that Eden's influence at Geneva as at Berlin had been to undermine the relatively stronger position which Bidault seemed disposed to take. The President said it was incomprehensible to him that the British should be acting as they were. He suggested that possibly in a further letter to Churchill dealing with the latter's prospective visit some strong note might be injected implying that the Churchill Government was really promoting a second Munich. He indicated that Churchill was very proud to keep his record, by which history would judge him, one of strength and wisdom, and that if Churchill felt that history would not judge well his present conduct, he might conceivably change. I said I would try my hand at drafting some further communication. The President recalled that we had taken out of his earlier message to Churchill of April 4[4] the reference to Japan and Manchuria, but perhaps that theme might be reintroduced.

I expressed the thought that it might well be that the situation in Indochina itself would soon have deteriorated to a point where nothing effectual could be done to stop the tide of Chinese Communists overrunning Southeast Asia except perhaps diversionary activities along the China coast, which would be conducted primarily by the Nationalist forces, but would require sea and air support from the United States. The President agreed that this matter might very well prove to be the case. I mentioned, however, that we were hamstrung by the constitutional situation and the apparent reluctance of Congress to give the President discretionary authority. I showed the President a copy of a rough draft of a Congressional resolution[5] which I had discussed with Knowland on Monday,[6] and against which Senator Knowland had reacted strongly in opposition, saying it would amount to giving the President a blank check to commit the country to war. The President suggested that possibly the proposal might be redrafted to define the area of operation more closely as being in and about the island and coastal areas of the Western Pacific.

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[4] See telegram 5179 to London, Apr. 4, p. 1238.

[5] Reference is presumably to the draft attached to the source text; for text, see annex.

[6] According to the log of the Secretary's daily appointments, the visit by Dulles to Capitol Hill on Monday, May 17, included a meeting with Senator Knowland at 10:15 a. m. (Princeton University, Dulles papers, "Daily Appointments") No record of the discussion has been found.

. . . .

[Annex]

Draft Congressional Resolution

[WASHINGTON,] May 17, 1954.

The President is authorized to employ Naval and Air forces of the United States to assist friendly governments of Asia to maintain their authority as against subversive and revolutionary efforts fomented by Communist regimes, provided such aid is requested by the governments concerned. This shall not be deemed to be a declaration of war and the authority hereby given shall be terminated on June 30, 1955, unless extended.

751G.00/5–2054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 20, 1954—1 p. m.

2478. Repeated information Paris 875, Geneva 136, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Reference Department telegram to Hanoi 633, Saigon 2307 repeated Geneva Tosec 166, Paris 4090, Bangkok unnumbered.[1] Consul Hanoi states that in addition Governor Tri's comments reported Hanoi telegram to Department 667 repeated Saigon 592, Paris 306, Bangkok unnumbered,[2] Tri said he had sent during the past week to Bao Dai and Buu Loc telegrams re serious situation in Vietnam. He urged Bao Dai approach US directly with view obtain clarification American attitude toward Vietnam and develop closer cooperation between two nations in effort solve urgent problems Vietnam. Tri said that French, as result their apparent inability act during present crisis, were rapidly losing control situation and that time has arrived when Vietnam must assume responsibility deal directly with US on problems mutual interest. Tri appears feel French no longer capable maintain direction of war effort and that constructive measures meet present situation developed only in direct United States–Vietnam relationship.[3]

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[1] Dated May 14, p. 1568.

[2] See footnote 4, p. 1569.

[3] McClintock transmitted a report on the deterioration of the internal situation in southern Vietnam in telegram 2480 of May 20. He cited indications of the danger of fighting between the confessional sects and the national army, of the increased strength of the Binh Xuyen in Saigon, and of possible physical danger to the Embassy. (751G.00/5–2054) In telegram 2483, May 20, he further reported that government forces in central Vietnam seemed entirely uncoordinated and leaderless. Vietnamese officials seemed hypnotized by the Geneva Conference and the possibility of a Viet Minh political or military victory. (751G.00/5–2054)

Tri said he urged Buu Loc return Vietnam immediately to reactivate Central Government which, according Tri, now almost nonexistent, bring himself up to date on present crisis and initiate necessary measures, particularly in North Vietnam.

McClintock

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 198th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, May 20, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Present at the 198th Meeting of the Council were the President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States (presiding for part of Items 1 and 8); the Secretary of State; the Acting Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Secretary of Commerce (for Item 6); the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (for Items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5); the Federal Civil Defense Administrator (for Items 1, 4 and 5); the Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers (for Items 1, 2 and 3); Mr. Milton for the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force (for Items 1, 2 and 3); the Deputy Director, Bureau of the Budget; Assistant Secretary of Commerce Anderson and Marshall Smith, Department of Commerce (for Item 6); Admiral DeLany, Foreign Operations Administration; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, and the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps (for Items 1, 2 and 3); the NSC Planning Board (for Items 1, 2 and 3), as follows: Mr. Bowie, Department of State; Mr. Tuttle, Department of the Treasury; Gen. Bonesteel, Department of Defense; Mr. McDonnell, Department of Justice; Gen. Porter, FOA; Mr. Elliott, ODM; Mr. Reid, Bureau of the Budget; Mr. Snapp, AEC; General Gerhart, JCS; Mr. Amory, CIA; and Mr. Staats, OCB. The following were also present: the Director of Central Intelligence; Mr. Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; Gen. Persons, Deputy Assistant to the President; Gen. Carroll, White House Staff Secretary; Mr. Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on May 21.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

. . . .

3. *Factors Affecting Military Operations in Indochina*

The National Security Council:

Noted an oral briefing on the subject presented by the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, U.S. Army, in lieu of the regular weekly briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence.

. . . .

7. *Assignment of U.S. Aircraft Technicians to Indochina* (NSC Actions Nos. 1074–*a* and 1086–*d*–(1))[2]

The National Security Council:[3]

Noted the President's statement that assignment of U.S. technicians for aircraft maintenance in Indochina beyond the previous termination date of June 15, 1954, would be authorized only to the extent required by the United States in order to be prepared for the possible repossession of U.S. equipment previously furnished to the French or to take other action in the interest of the United States.

Note: The above action subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of Defense.

8. *Regional Grouping in Southeast Asia*[4]

. . . .

Meanwhile, talks had been going on in Paris with the French with respect to our pre-conditions for military intervention in Indochina. These talks with the French had now been interrupted, owing to the departure of General Ely to Indochina for a brief inspection of the military situation there. We had agreed, said Secretary Dulles, that General Trapnell should go to Paris to discuss military problems with Premier Laniel and his associates. In fact, General Trapnell had been on his way to Paris when we received word that General Ely had gone to Indochina. We had accordingly called General Trapnell back from

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[2] For NSC Action No. 1074, see extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 190th Meeting of the National Security Council, Mar. 25, p. 1163; for NSC Action No. 1086, see the memorandum of discussion at the 192d NSC Meeting, Apr. 6, p. 1250.

[3] The statement which follows constituted NSC Action No. 1131, May 20, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

In his memoirs, Richard M. Nixon describes NSC consideration of this matter as follows: "On May 20 the NSC discussed the possibility of keeping the two hundred American mechanics in Vietnam past June, but Eisenhower dismissed the idea. First, he said. the French were already going back on their word to keep up the fighting. Second, he said that such an extension would make our future relations with Congress very difficult, because he had given a solemn pledge that the mechanics would come out by June 15, and he intended to honor his pledge." (*Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, p. 155)

[4] For the portion of the record of the discussion of this agenda item not printed here, see volume XII.

Gander, but he would be sent to Paris again after the return of General Ely.

Secretary Dulles indicated that if these talks with the French on pre-conditions succeeded, they would form the cornerstone of a regional grouping which would include Indochina, but he did not believe that the French had really made up their minds whether or not they wanted to continue the war in Indochina with U.S. participation. These talks were probably being used chiefly to strengthen the French bargaining position with the Communists at Geneva. While one couldn't be sure, Secretary Dulles felt that even if Premier Laniel agreed to meet our pre-conditions, the French Chamber of Deputies wouldn't go along with the decision. He was therefore inclined to the view that in our conversations with the French on pre-conditions we were going through an academic exercise except in so far as these conversations affected the Geneva Conference. He did not exclude, however, all possibility that the French might ultimately agree to internationalize the conflict.

With respect to the U.S. pre-conditions, Secretary Dulles expressed the view that we might be exaggerating the significance of the independence issue for the Associated States. The Associated States had already achieved in fact a very high degree of independence. Moreover, if we harped on the independence issue it might well rise to embarrass us when the scene shifted from Indochina to Malaya.

In explaining the hesitations of Australia and New Zealand, Secretary Dulles pointed out that the Australians were in a tough spot in view of the imminence of the national election. Accordingly, we had refrained from pressing the Australians too hard. Secretary Dulles indicated that the Foreign Minister of New Zealand was seeing the President this afternoon. Both these Dominions were torn between their sentimental ties with the United Kingdom (now greatly strengthened by the visit of the young Queen) and their practical security ties with the United States. Above all, they wished to avoid making a choice between these ties.[5]

Secretary Dulles then stated that he had just sent a message to Ambassador Dillon, emphasizing the importance of the time factor in discussions with the French regarding U.S. intervention in Indochina. He had pointed out in this message that if the French delayed too long in agreeing to the pre-conditions for U.S. intervention, it might be too late for the U.S. to intervene at all, since the military and political situation in Indochina was deteriorating so rapidly. In short, it might be impractical for the United States to intervene even if our pre-conditions were finally agreed to by the French.

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[5] Assistant Secretary Merchant discussed the problems of Indochina, the Geneva Conference, and united action with Ambassador Spender of Australia on May 17; with Ambassador Munro of New Zealand on May 17; and with Ambassador Makins of the United Kingdom on May 13, May 17, and May 18. Memoranda of these conversations are in file 751G.00. The conversations with Ambassadors Spender, Munro, and Makins are summarized in telegram Tosec 190 to Geneva of May 17; for text, see volume XII. For memoranda of conversations between Secretary Dulles and Foreign Minister Webb of New Zealand in Washington on May 20 and 21 regarding the problems of Indochina, the Geneva Conference, and united action, see *ibid.*

Mr. Cutler asked Secretary Dulles whether the French Government had as yet formally asked for U.S. armed intervention. Secretary Dulles replied by describing the two informal French suggestions for "one-shot" air strikes by the United States, but indicated clearly that there had been no formal French request for United States partnership in the Indochina war. He added that he had also recently warned Ambassador Dillon not to allow himself to be maneuvered into a position where the French could blame the United States for the loss of Indochina.

The Vice President then asked Secretary Dulles for an explanation of how Dillon had been conducting his conversations with the French regarding the pre-conditions for U.S. intervention. Did the Ambassador simply present the list of our pre-conditions to the French and then wait for an answer? Or did Dillon actually press the French for a favorable response to these pre-conditions?

Secretary Dulles replied that Ambassador Dillon conducted his negotiations with Premier Laniel and with Under Secretary Schumann strictly on an oral basis. Nothing in writing passed either way. They had last met on Monday,[6] at which time the French had suggested suspension of further conversations during the absence of General Ely.

The Vice President then asked Secretary Dulles with whom Premier Laniel would be obliged to clear his own decision to ask for U.S. participation. Secretary Dulles said that we would require clearance by the Chamber of Deputies, because Laniel's government was so shaky that it could be easily overthrown and its decisions reversed and disavowed.

Secretary Dulles went on to state his belief that the Communist negotiators at Geneva would continue to dangle false hopes before the French so that the latter would be unable to reach any firm decision until the situation in Indochina had deteriorated to a point where it was beyond salvation by any means.

Mr. Allen Dulles confirmed the likelihood of these Communist tactics, and stated that intelligence indicated that General Cogny was not getting the reinforcements he needed to save the situation in the Tonkin Delta. Vietminh forces were being moved in the direction of the Delta with the apparent view to launching an attack there, though as yet we could not be absolutely sure of the motives for this move.

The Vice President asked if the following constituted an accurate summation of the existing situation: The British and the French were dragging their feet until such time as the possibility for a settlement by the Geneva Conference appeared clearly hopeless. The Communists were well aware that the British and French were dragging their feet, and would protract the negotiations until they were sure that they had won the war in Indochina. .

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[6] May 18.

Secretary Dulles replied that the Vice President's summary was substantially correct. The only ray of hope would be Communist fear of United States intervention in Indochina or of general war. This fear might conceivably induce the Communists to moderate their demands on the French at Geneva. The Communists realize that the United States is not permitting the British a veto on our actions in this area, and this knowledge was certainly not lost on the Communists.

The remainder of the discussion related to Congressional action. Secretary Dulles pointed out the desirability of getting Congress to give some degree of discretionary power to the President to act during the period Congress was adjourned.

The National Security Council:

a. Discussed the subject in the light of a report by Mr. Cutler, based on the discussion of the subject in the NSC Planning Board.[7]

b. Noted and discussed an oral report by the Secretary of State on developments with respect to the formation of a regional grouping in Southeast Asia; the Geneva Conference; and the military situation in Indochina.

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[7] For a description of Cutler's oral report, see extracts of this memorandum, volume XII.

751G.00/5–2054

Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, 20 May 1954.

Subject: U.S. Military Participation in Indochina[2]

1. In recent discussions between the French and the Department of State relating to U.S. military intervention in Indochina, the U.S.

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[1] The source text is accompanied by the following note from Morris Draper of the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State to Counselor MacArthur: "The original of the attached memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which you have seen, has gone to the Secretary. This attached copy and one other, which has been sent to Mr. Bowie, are the only two which Defense has authorized us to have."

Acting Secretary of Defense Anderson sent an additional copy of this memorandum to Secretary of State Dulles on June 5. Anderson's letter of transmittal indicated that he concurred in the views of the JCS. (751G.5/6–554) On the same day, Anderson also sent a copy of the memorandum to the President's Special Assistant. (JCS files)

[2] A separate memorandum on this subject was transmitted to the Secretary of Defense on May 19 by Robert T. Stevens, Secretary of the Army; for text, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pp. 475–476.

Government specified certain conditions which would have to obtain if U.S. military intervention were to be undertaken. Among these conditions were:

a. That France would undertake not to withdraw its forces from Indochina during period of united action so that forces from U.S. principally air and sea and others would be supplementary and not in substitution;

b. That agreement would have to be reached on training of native troops and on command structure for united action.

2. On the assumption that United States armed forces intervene in the conflict in Indochina, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have agreed that a Department of Defense position should be formulated as to the size and composition of U.S. force contributions to be made and the command structure to be established. In formulating these views the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been guided by several factors, among which are:

a. The limited availability of U.S. forces for military action in Indochina.

b. The current numerical advantage of the French Union forces over the enemy, i.e., approximately 5 to 3.

c. The undesirability of basing large numbers of U.S. forces in Indochina.

d. The primary need for an expanded and intensified training program as being the current greatest need.

e. The lack of required facilities for superimposing U.S. Air Force forces on existing facilities in Indochina.

f. The implications of a reaction of the Chinese Communists in the event of U.S. participation.

g. Atomic weapons will be used whenever it is to our military advantage.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the basic principle underlying any command structure for operations in Indochina which is acceptable to the United States must enable the U.S. to influence future strategy in Indochina. In addition, they believe that some new means to furnish the military guidance which heretofore has come from Paris must be found. A possible solution for over-all strategic guidance is a Military Representatives Committee with membership from those nations contributing the principal forces of the coalition with a steering or standing group along the lines of NATO. This group would be served by a staff organized along the lines of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of[3] Staff composed primarily of U.S. and French officers.

4. Although the Allied Commander in Chief in Indochina should be French, there must be a U.S. Deputy with sufficient staff assistance

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[3] The words "Chiefs of" were deleted by a JCS corrigendum on May 24, 1954. (JCS files)

to provide liaison with the French and coordinate U.S. activities with the over-all operations. CINCPAC would exercise command over all U.S. forces based in Indochina and other forces assigned to him for operations in Indochina. In addition, a U.S. Air Advisor would be provided the French Commander in Chief for the purpose of advising him concerning the air effort.

5. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the best military course for eventual victory in Indochina is the development of effective native armed forces. Thus far the French have been unsuccessful in their efforts to develop such forces. A firm commitment by the French and firm requests from the respective governments of the Associated States for the training and development of native forces by the United States should be a prerequisite of U.S. participation. It is estimated that an augmentation of MAAG Indochina on the order of 2250, with an appropriate logistic support force, would be required to initiate this program. The size of this force and security arrangements therefor will be determined in light of recommendations requested from CINCPAC and Chief, MAAG Indochina.

6. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that U.S. participation be limited primarily to Naval and Air Forces. The composition of these forces should be on the order of the following:

a. Naval Forces. A fast carrier Task Force and supporting forces as necessary in accordance with developments in the situation.

b. Air Forces. U.S. Air Force units operating from present bases outside Indochina as may be required. The order of magnitude of this effort cannot now be estimated since it will depend on developments in the situation.

7. The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that the principal sources of Viet Minh military supply lie outside Indochina. The destruction or neutralization of those outside sources supporting the Viet Minh would materially reduce the French military problems in Indochina.

8. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that committing to the Indochina conflict Naval forces in excess of the above or basing substantial air forces therein will involve maldeployment of forces and reduce readiness to meet probable Chinese Communist reaction elsewhere in the Far East. From the point of view of the United States, with reference to the Far East as a whole, Indochina is devoid of decisive military objectives and the allocation of more than token U.S. armed forces to that area would be a serious diversion of limited U.S. capabilities.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
ARTHUR RADFORD
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations"

Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Counselor (MacArthur)[1]

[WASHINGTON,] May 20, 1954—6 p. m.

The Sec. asked where are we on reply to Dillon's long cable re French conversations, Marines, etc.[2] M. said we sent a stop-gap cable yesterday saying we need more NSC consideration re the Marines.[3] The Sec. said that would take a long time, and M. agreed, but said we can't act until fundamental issues involved are considered there. Bowie and he are working on a paper which tries to lay these things out, and they may have it ready to show the Sec. tomorrow. The Sec. thinks it is an academic exercise we are going through in the sense it is not going to come to a positive result other than as it affects those who are in Geneva. We don't want to wreck the talks there—just say it is discussable. M. said nothing can be done until those who went out the other way get back, as the French will be pretty well stymied. M. said George Anderson called and said Gen. V——? [Valluy] was in and was upset about the 5-power talks. Radford said no decision has been reached, and it would be discussed with the French when it is in more concrete form. V. said we have to wait for Ely to return. It should be on a high level—Anderson said we can match stars with anyone and get an appropriate guy. What they want, said M., is a commitment of ground forces, and not what we offered. Dillon knows we can't say anything until early next week at least. The Sec. said we must not lose sight of what we are doing—in what we can get benefit out of. We are trying to create in the minds of the French and those in Geneva that serious talks are going on. Let us not dispel that. The details of a plan of battle can't be discussed until trip is over. The Sec.'s idea is to get word to Dillon that some elements were discussable but as part of program that could be expected to succeed. It is a question of time—what is sufficient now won't be 2–3 months from now. M. will work on something for the Sec. to see in the a.m. The Sec. said Dillon's reply re independence was not helpful.[4] It is an essay—they agreed on that. The Sec. wants a precise formula from Dillon. M. will so advise him.

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[1] Drafted by Phyllis D. Bernau of the office of the Secretary of State.

[2] Reference is to telegram 4416 from Paris, May 17, which is discussed in footnote 2, p. 1580. For the reply to telegram 4416, see telegram 4194 to Paris, May 21, *infra*.

[3] Reference is to telegram 4152 to Paris, May 19; for text, see footnote 2, p. 1580.

[4] See telegram 4402 from Paris, May 17, p. 1574.

751G.5/5–2154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, May 21, 1954—2:22 p. m.

4194. Eyes only Ambassador from Secretary. ReEmbtel 4416 rptd Geneva 251.[2]

1. Marines.

Within context of coherent and realistic overall plan for conduct of collective military operations in Indochina, we would not exclude sending some marines, if this made military sense. Until Ely returns from Paris and reports, we assume French will not be able to discuss seriously such overall plan. On other hand we are definitely not prepared to make commitments of marines or other contingents on piecemeal basis and for merely psychological reasons. When French are able to discuss specific plan for collective operations in practical terms we will be ready to discuss what other countries including US should contribute.

2. Timing.

We are concerned about when decision can be taken re internationalizing conflict. It seems quite clear that military measures, which if taken in next few weeks could enable holding of Indochina, might be hopelessly inadequate two months from now if military and political situation Indochina continues to deteriorate. We are not clear as to when French envisage really coming to grips with problem and how this is related to progress or lack thereof at Geneva. Would appreciate your best estimate as to:

a. Whether French view present talks with us as anything more than a device to strengthen their hand at Geneva;
b. If Communists drag out Geneva talks will French in meantime be unable to take any decision re internationalizing conflict;
c. When will French really get down to cases with us re conditions;
d. If Laniel agrees to our conditions, when would he be likely to submit them to Cabinet and Parliament.

3. Independence.

Your several telegrams ably set forth French point of view on independence for Associated States. Our concern is to clarify status of Associated States in manner which will mobilize local support in Vietnam and SEA, minimize other Asian opposition, and satisfy US and free world opinion. While suggestions in your 4402[3] may be useful for this purpose, we do not believe they would meet problem fully. Main difficulty is that even if Associated States enjoyed real independence today, as fully as French assert, French have stated this so often in past that it is hard now to obtain credence. Moreover, fact that treaty of independence and treaty of association are inextricably tied together by French cannot fail to give impression that Vietnamese decision to remain in French Union was not freely arrived at but was extorted as price for independence. I would appreciate your considering this further and sending me a specific formula to meet this problem.

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[1] Drafted by Bowie, Bonbright, and MacArthur. Repeated to Geneva as Tedul 101, from the Secretary eyes only for the Under Secretary.
[2] See footnote 2, p. 1580.
[3] Dated May 17, p. 1574.

DULLES

INR–NIE files

National Intelligence Estimate

SECRET
NIE 63–3–54

WASHINGTON, 21 May 1954.

PROBABLE MILITARY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA OVER THE NEXT 30 DAYS[1]

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable military and political developments in Indochina over the next 30 days.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. That no cease-fire agreement is reached at the Geneva Conference during the period of this estimate.

2. That French policy with respect to Indochina will not undergo a radical change for the worse within the next 30 days.

THE ESTIMATE

Military Developments

1. The fall of Dien Bien Phu has not precipitated a collapse of the French and Vietnamese military positions in Indochina, but it has had a significant impact upon the attitudes toward the war of all participants. From the Viet Minh viewpoint, the fall of Dien Bien Phu has created a climate of victory which offers possibilities for further advances. We believe that the Viet Minh will raise their present level of operations, seeking to reduce further the French and Vietnamese

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, "The Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 20 May 1954. The AEC and FBI abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

"The following member organizations of the Intelligence Advisory Committee participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff."

The cover sheet also indicates that this estimate superseded NIE 63–54 of Apr. 30, p. 1451.

will to continue the war, to improve the Communist basis for bargaining at Geneva, to prevent major redeployments of French Union forces, to prepare for major campaigns, and to exploit any opportunities for early victory. From the French Union viewpoint, the defeat at Dien Bien Phu has underscored the fact that the war cannot be won by French efforts alone. Accordingly, the main French effort appears at present to be directed toward maintaining and in any case preventing a collapse of the French Union military position before a cease-fire is negotiated at Geneva or the conflict is internationalized.

Military Developments Within the Next Two Weeks

2. Without redeployment of major units, the Viet Minh will have during the next two weeks the capability to increase the present level of their military operations throughout Indochina. In the Delta, the Viet Minh over the next two weeks will probably continue to mount attacks against French strong points and to cut temporarily the lines of communications between Hanoi and Haiphong. In addition, they will probably continue to augment their capabilities for sabotage and terrorist activities in Hanoi and Haiphong. However, while the scale of these activities will increase, they will probably not exercise these capabilities for sabotage and terrorism to the full during the next two weeks except in the event of large-scale military operations in this area. Outside the Delta, the Viet Minh will probably launch attacks in central Vietnam, conduct raiding operations in Laos, and increase guerrilla operations in Cambodia.

3. We consider that, despite the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the French Union forces still retain the will to defend key points. In the Delta, the French almost certainly will possess for at least the next two weeks the capability to hold major positions. They have redeployed one mobile group from Laos to the Delta, and they apparently intend to regroup forces already within the Delta even though this may require the abandonment of some outlying Delta strong points. Outside the Delta region, the French will probably have the capability to hold most positions during the next two weeks although they may abandon certain positions in order to concentrate their troops in critical areas elsewhere.

Military Developments Within the Next 30 Days

4. If major units now at Dien Bien Phu are redeployed as rapidly as possible, the Viet Minh can within the next 30 days attain a capability for launching a heavy assault against French positions in the Delta. Preparations are now being made for moving the bulk of the Viet Minh units from Dien Bien Phu toward their bases in the Delta area, and there are indications that redeployment has begun. We believe that approximately one division will remain initially in the

vicinity of Dien Bien Phu. The major portion of the forces at Dien Bien Phu with their heavy equipment could not assemble in the Delta area before 7–15 June, although it is believed that their lightly-equipped units could complete the movement by 31 May. However, the gradual increase in intensity of rains during the month of June, combined with French aerial attacks on Route 41, may slow down the movement.

5. In addition to the force at Dien Bien Phu, the concentration of 17 battalions at Thai Nguyen, a point approximately 35 miles north of Hanoi, may be used to augment the Viet Minh capability for major attacks against the Delta. These units, 13 of which are regional battalions, appear to be undergoing advanced training. It is unlikely that these troops will be independently committed in major attacks on Delta strong points during the next 30 days. However, they might be used to attack French static defense units or to fill out a major attacking force made up of units now at Dien Bien Phu.

6. If military considerations alone dictate, we estimate that the Viet Minh will not launch an all-out assault against the Delta during the next 30 days. The major factors militating against such an assault are: the requirement for reorganization and recuperation of the main striking force from Dien Bien Phu, the limited period of time to prepare for major assaults against fortified positions, the possibilities of delay in movement of artillery units into position, the onset of the rainy season with resultant supply difficulties, and the flooding of areas within the Delta which restrict routes for troop movements and areas of maneuver. The most important deterrent, however, is the French strength in manpower, firepower, and airpower. However, the Viet Minh might undertake an assault on the Delta because of political requirements in relation to Geneva, or on the basis of their estimate that French Union forces had become demoralized and that Viet Minh capabilities for assault combined with sabotage, terrorism, and insurrection might prove decisive in the Delta. Barring a serious deterioration of the will to fight of the French Union forces as a result of political developments in Indochina or elsewhere, we believe that the French would be able to counter or blunt such an assault within the next 30 days.

7. On the other hand, we anticipate that, short of mounting an all-out assault on the Delta, the Viet Minh during the next 30 days will increase their present level of operations and will attack French strong points in the Delta and elsewhere. Although we consider it likely that the French will suffer some reverses from attacks on this scale, we believe that they will be able to retain possession of most of their key strong points throughout Indochina, and will be able to keep open

the lines of communications between Hanoi and Haiphong except for frequent but temporary interruptions.

8. It is possible that defections by Vietnamese units will occur during the next 30 days and will thus reduce the capabilities of French Union forces. Some Vietnamese from militia units are believed to have defected recently to the Viet Minh with their arms. On the other hand, since the fall of Dien Bien Phu, French and Vietnamese units have been engaged with no indication of impaired morale or will to fight. We estimate that, unless the Vietnamese become convinced that the French intend to sell out in Indochina or unless the Viet Minh achieve substantial military successes, the fighting capabilities of the French Union forces during the next 30 days will not deteriorate so severely as to preclude their employment as an effective military force. There is always the possibility, however, that some spectacular Viet Minh successes in the Delta would convince the native population and Vietnamese troops there that victory in the Delta was imminent, in which case an extremely rapid deterioration of the situation in north Vietnam would ensue.

Political Developments

9. Barring the unlikely event of a large-scale Viet Minh invasion or of a *coup d'état*, Laos and Cambodia will probably retain their present uncertain political stability during the next 30 days. The Laotian Government will almost certainly remain in power if the French continue to provide it with support. The Cambodian Government will probably retain control and will continue its efforts to solicit direct US aid.

10. Political stability in Vietnam will probably continue to deteriorate during this period. In the absence of both Bao Dai and Buu Loc, factionalism has become extreme, and the Vietnamese central government is virtually paralyzed. It is possible that the Vietnam central government will disintegrate during the next 30 days. It is also possible that a coup may be attempted by General Hinh, who has obvious dictatorial ambitions. If the Vietnam central government should disintegrate, the French could almost certainly maintain civil control temporarily in the regions they occupy by working through Vietnamese regional governors and local officials. A large part of the Vietnamese troops in the French Union forces probably would continue at least temporarily to be responsive to the French High Command. Thus disintegration of the Vietnam central government, while it would complicate negotiations at Geneva, would almost certainly not cause an immediate collapse of French control in Indochina unless it were accompanied or preceded by a collapse of the French military position.

751G.00/5–2254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 22, 1954—2 p. m.

2496. Repeated information priority Paris 884, Geneva 143, London 69, Manila 283. I have just had a conversation with General Ely in presence of DeJean. In response to my question as to his estimate of military situation, Ely said it was vital for French Union forces to hold the Tonkin Delta and he had ordered new troop dispositions to that end. Situation in Laos was calm and thus he could bring French Union battalions and groupes mobiles from that theater by air to delta. Likewise he intended to relieve French Union forces now on static guard post duty by Vietnamese National Army troops and thus in general increase French mobile striking force in delta which would be capable of a war of maneuver.

Some additional French reinforcements are on way to Indochina. 2800 Foreign Legion have arrived at Cap St. Jacques today and Ely hopes to bring a few additional battalions (Paris telegram 4466)[1] by air. He probably will make a request on US for air lift in this case.

Despite these dispositions, Ely did not hide gravity of military situation in delta. He said there was evidence that the 16 Viet Minh regional battalions now in vicinity of Thai Nguyen were there for training and equipment in more modern arms, including possibly tanks, and they could be formed into an additional division with some extra battalions left over. If Giap could bring his four divisions from Dien Bien Phu to delta quickly, reorganize these 16 regional battalions, and utilize Viet Minh 320 division which is now inside delta, situation might become very serious. However, on balance Ely felt that French could dominate situation.

He said he would recommend to his government that delta be held at all costs. He said "In the 44 [*14*] war we had our eyes fixed on the line of the Vosges but war was actually won in Balkans. In 38 we had our eyes fixed on the Maginot line but the war was lost in Czechoslovakia. In 54 we can lose Europe if we do not hold here".

McCLINTOCK

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[1] Telegram 4466 from Paris, May 20, repeated to Geneva and Saigon, not printed, contained the Embassy's report of a conversation with Minister for the Associated States Jacquet regarding French plans for sending reinforcements to Indochina. (751G.00/5–2054)

751G.00/5–2254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, May 22, 1954—3 p. m.

2499. Repeated information priority Paris 885, Geneva 144, Manila 286. Manila eyes only Ambassador. General O'Daniel had a three hour conference this morning with General Ely. O'Daniel reported to me before his departure at 1300 for Manila. He said Ely had agreed that a greatly enlarged MAAG training section should be established and that two large training camps would at once be turned over for American training of Vietnamese national troops. Command responsibility for camps, however, would remain either in French or Vietnamese hands in respect of mutually accepted principle of unity of command. However, US instructors would be permitted to serve in active units as military advisors to Vietnamese commanders and this entailed possibility of US military participation in combat. Ely repeated to O'Daniel remark he had made in my presence as reported earlier this week that more Americans got into war here better he would be pleased.

On basic issue which disturbs General O'Daniel, namely formation of Vietnamese army in divisional units, General Ely would not commit himself to divisions but merely told O'Daniel he would agree to training of larger units than heretofore. He mentioned five battalions as maximum strength of such units. General O'Daniel is disappointed at this reluctance on part of French and I informed General O'Daniel that in my opinion so long as Navarre is Commander-in-Chief here he will continue to operate in terms of battalions or at utmost groupes mobiles. When I later saw General Ely after O'Daniel's departure, I raised this question. Ely said he thought it was only a matter of detail. I said that he was mistaken, at least so far as General O'Daniel was concerned, because latter attached utmost importance to creation of divisions and might indeed be prone to recommend that we do not undertake proposed training unless his requirement as to divisions is met. I suggested as possible compromise that maybe Ely could agree on six battalions and call this unit a division (O'Daniel had previously told me he would be agreeable to a six battalion division). Ely said he thought this could be worked out upon his return to Paris. Ely likewise told me, although apparently he did not mention this to O'Daniel, that he would be willing for US instructors to take over four training camps if suitable personnel could be found.

I feel that there must be a very clear understanding between US and French Governments as to what we are getting into in this training proposal, since it is possible that French will expect us to train troops which they will use according to their own doctrine, while we will be training troops in expectation they will be used according to our doctrine. I cautioned General O'Daniel that we should not give easy assent until we had looked at every aspect of this problem and he said he had not indicated his final agreement to General Ely. I recalled to General O'Daniel that once as a little boy I had seen a water snake in a creek which had swallowed a catfish. The spines of the fish had pierced the snake's throat and he could get the fish neither down nor up. We do not want to get ourselves in a similar position here.

McClintock

751G.00/5-2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, May 22, 1954—11 p. m.

4499. Repeated information Geneva 280. Department limit distribution. Geneva eyes only Under Secretary. Re Dep. tel. 4194.[1] I saw Maurice Schumann late Saturday afternoon [2] and conveyed to him information contained in ref. tel. He was well pleased with contents of para 1 regarding Marines which he felt answered adequately one of three serious questions which he had posed last Monday. Regarding second serious problem, that of clarifying independence of the Associated States, Schumann had nothing of interest to say except to reiterate the impossibility of publicity creating a right of secession from the French Union. The third serious problem raised by Schumann last Monday was the requirement that there be some degree of flexibility in regard to withdrawal of French forces from Indo China in the event of a substantial strengthening of the Vietnam National Army. As he then said, the French do not feel that they can make a commitment to keep their present forces, plus the reinforcements they are now sending, in Indo China for the whole period of united action. They feel that such a commitment for an indefinite period is impossible. The French are perfectly willing to agree that they will not remove their forces as additional forces from the United States and other countries come in, but they do want flexibility. Specifically, they might make some reduction in their forces as the Viet Nam National Army increased provided that the military situation allowed such a reduction. My feeling is that even if we could force the French to accept such a commitment it would certainly ensure indefinite postponement of E.D.C.[3] Ref. tel. gave no answer to this question and Schumann is still awaiting our views.

As to timing, the French would like to come to full agreement with the U.S. just as soon as possible. Such an agreement would only be announced or used when it became obvious to French that it was impossible to secure an honorable armistice at Geneva.

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[1] Dated May 21, p. 1594.

[2] May 22.

[3] Regarding the relationship between Indochina and the European Defense Community, see telegram 4440 from Paris, May 19, volume v.

I do not understand para 2(*c*) of ref. tel. as French consider that negotiations are now fully under way except for military negotiations regarding training, command and operational planning, etc. The French would like to undertake such military negotiations as soon as possible and request information as to where we would like such negotiations to take place. I am sure that unless some other channel of negotiation has been set up, they would want to talk with General Trapnell along these lines. In answer to para 2(*d*) French would not submit agreement to cabinet or parliament until they were ready to ask for actual U.S. intervention. The time schedule, as I see it, would be (1) completion of negotiations; (2) some method, not necessarily public announcement, of letting Communists at Geneva know that agreement had been reached. If this did not produce results (3) decision that an honorable armistice was not possible at Geneva; (4) submission of agreement to cabinet and French parliament followed immediately by formal request to U.S.

After I had completed my conversation with Schumann, Bidault joined us for a few minutes and Schumann outlined status of negotiations to him. He did not have a great deal to add except to emphasize the impossibility of a public right of secession from the French Union. He remarked that the only document which contained such a right of secession was the constitution of Soviet Russia. He also enlarged upon the fact that if such a declaration were made it would cause immediate troubles in Africa which would necessitate further acts of repression on the part of the French, all of which would be most undesirable. He finished by saying the French could never agree to make such a statement and rather than make it, they would continue to fight by themselves even though the results might be disastrous. My own feeling is that if we wish to provide military assistance to France and the Associated States in Indo China we will have to abandon idea of French making any statement regarding the right of secession. My views on this subject have been motivated by my conviction that if we insist on such a statement, the result will be acceptance of surrender terms similar to those posed by Viet Minh either by this government or by a succeeding government. I will consider problem further and attempt to provide some formula as requested in ref. tel.

Bidault also made several remarks about how ill-informed he had been in Geneva on these negotiations. He said that Margerie had talked with Achilles but that he himself had never talked with the Under Secretary on this subject. I have the impression that he would very much like to have the Under Secretary talk with him about this early next week.

DILLON

751G.00/5-2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, May 24, 1954—noon.

4503. Repeated information Geneva 283. Limit distribution. Eyes only Under Secretary. Re Deptels 4194 [1] and 4023.[2] In order to clarify status of negotiations on conditions mentioned para 2 Deptel 4023, following is my present understanding regarding each condition:

2–*a*. French accept.

2–*b*. French accept in principle but I am sure that they would not be disposed to request assistance of these states until such time as U.S. is in position to inform French that invitations would be accepted by Thailand and Philippines, and probably accepted by Australia and New Zealand. Thus completion of condition 2–*b* is now essentially a U.S. responsibility. French are uninformed regarding progress of negotiations on this subject with the exception of what they read in the press, and they would very much appreciate any information which can be given them.

2–*c*. Accepted in principle by French with the understanding that all concerned now agree that in the first instance appeal U.N. should be made only by Thailand. Bidault personally continues to have certain reservations regarding discussion in General Assembly for fear of provoking Arab States, but Schumann and Laniel are firm on this point and I am sure that their point of view will prevail.

2–*d*. Will comment in later telegram.

2–*e*. French, as result of information in Deptel 4194 are now satisfied as to composition U.S. forces. However, their satisfaction is based on their feeling that General Ely will have no difficulty in demonstrating strictly military needs for Marines to JCS. This, I assume, would be covered in military planning talks which French desire to start promptly. If Ely should be unable to convince JCS of need for Marines a serious problem would arise, as while U.S. naturally cannot commit Marines for merely psychological reasons, nevertheless such reasons would be overriding in French Parliament and public opinion. French accept undertaking that forces from U.S. and other nations would be supplementary and not in substitution for French forces, but they are unwilling to be tied to entire period of united action for reasons expressed in Embtels 4416 [3] and 4499,[4] as well as fact that there would be no similar commitment regarding U.S. and other forces. I think French would readily agree to a formula such as following: "France would agree that forces from US and other nations will be supplementary to French Union forces in Indochina and not in substitution thereof."

2–*f*. French are anxious to undertake military negotiations promptly on this item and on overall military planning. Understand Ely has had preliminary talks with O'Daniel regarding training. I would think that best place for these negotiations would be Washington with Valluy representing French and with possibility of two or three days visit by General Ely.

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[1] Dated May 21, p. 1594.

[2] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

[3] See footnote 2, p. 1580.

[4] *Supra*.

Naturally, it must be realized that proposals will stand or fall as a whole and answers I outlined above are not as yet commitments, but do represent present thinking of Laniel and Schumann.

Brief answers to questions posed in para 2 of Deptel 4194 are:

2–*a*. French clearly view present talks both as device to strengthen hand at Geneva and as preparing way for military intervention if necessary.

2–*b*. French expected to take decision on internationalization at such time as it becomes clear to public opinion that an honorable armistice is not possible at Geneva. I should think that this moment might arrive sometime within the next two or three weeks.

2–*c*. French have been negotiating seriously since receipt of Deptel 4023.

2–*d*. Immediately after decision is taken that honorable armistice is not possible at Geneva.

Military situation in delta will also have direct influence on French timing. The less the military pressure from the Vietminh, the longer the French would be willing to negotiate at Geneva for an armistice, or conversely, the greater the military pressure the quicker they will decide that no honorable armistice is possible at Geneva.

DILLON

751G.00/5–2454: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, May 24, 1954—6 p. m.

4514. Repeated information Geneva 287, Saigon 542. Department limit distribution. Eyes only McClintock Saigon. Subject: Further clarification of independence of Associated States.

A. If we wish to come to any agreement with French on this subject it is clear to me that we will have to abandon concept of statement granting right of withdrawal from French Union. French feeling on this subject is highly emotional and is not confined to government and parliament, but is shared by general public.

1. In eyes of Frenchmen the only reason for French to continue to fight in Indochina is their obligation toward the Associated States as part of the French Union. A statement by French Government that Associated States would have right to withdraw from French Union at any time would in eyes of all Frenchmen fatally compromise their attachment to the French Union, and therefore, remove remaining reasons to fight.

2. French Union comprises not only Associated States but also Metropolitan France, overseas departments (Algeria, Martinique, etc.) and "old colonies" (French equatorial Africa, Madagascar, etc.). Protectorates, Tunis and Morocco, are not in Union but French naturally hope that eventually they too will join as additional "Associated States" as defined in French Constitution. The French feel that any

statement regarding right of withdrawal would lead to disturbances in Africa and would be an invitation to nationalist forces in Tunis and Morocco to increase terroristic activities.

3. Associated States have never requested right of withdrawal so French cannot understand why it has come up. Also such a statement does not seem to have any precedent. Inquiry at British Embassy reveals that there is no statement or written document confirming right of Commonwealth countries to leave Commonwealth. However, it is understood by all that Commonwealth countries by unilateral action can sever ties with Commonwealth. Exactly same situation will exist in Vietnam after departure of French Expeditionary Corps. If Vietnam then should decide unilaterally to leave French Union, presumably by abrogating treaty of association or by any other legislative process of her own devising, there would be nothing to prevent her departure. No Frenchman would ever consider attempt to fight their way back into Indochina.

B. After considerable thought I have been unable to conceive of any way in which question of right of withdrawal can be compromised in a public statement. Therefore, we will have to find some other means by which to clarify the independence of Associated States. The following program would appear appropriate.

1. Require the signature by France and Vietnam of at least the two basic treaties on independence and association with French Union which have already been approved by draft form. Neither French Government nor Vietnamese seem in a hurry to get these documents signed so it may require pressure on both sides. If signature of these documents were made a firm prerequisite for US assistance I feel confident that French Government for their part would agree to prompt signature and assume Bao Dai would as well.

2. At the time of signature Bao Dai should make a very clear statement regarding the full independence of Vietnam and the fact that Vietnam is joining French Union entirely of her own accord.

3. Public announcement be made that US is taking over substantial responsibility for training of Vietnamese National Army which will be trained in units of decision 6.

4. Statement by highest US authority that they are convinced that Vietnam is now a fully independent nation and that US will deal with Vietnam as such.[1]

Dillon

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[1] In telegram 2531 from Saigon, May 25, repeated to Geneva and Paris, Chargé McClintock stated that he was mystified as to the apparent concern for publicizing the right of Vietnam to withdraw from the French Union. He contended that "we should leave well enough alone and not insist on something which Vietnamese themselves have never asked for." (751G.00/5-2554) On the same day, Under Secretary Smith presented his views on the subject in telegram Dulte 109 from Geneva (repeated to Paris and Saigon), which read as follows:

"I would like to reinforce the last paragraph of Dillon's message on independence Associated States. I believe that it is of the utmost importance to have prompt signature of the two basic treaties. Aside from the fact that we are in a false position here until these are signed, it is probable that when they are signed Bao Dai will return promptly and, to the extent his energy and ability permit, will try to assume national leadership." (751G.00/5-2554)

751G.00/5-2454

Memorandum by the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Drumright) to the Counselor (MacArthur)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 24, 1954.

Subject: Comment on JCS Memorandum of 20 May regarding U.S. Military participation in Indochina[2]

In general, the JCS memorandum appears to envisage little more than a token military intervention in Indochina. It is doubtful if the JCS concept would meet French requirements which apparently are geared to a much larger and more active US intervention. If we should intervene, even on the basis apparently envisaged by the JCS, we should be prepared for changed circumstances which might compel us to intervene on a massive scale.

We have the following specific comments on certain of the numbered paragraphs.

Paragraph 1: No comment.

Paragraph 2*b*: Although we believe the numerical ratio of French Union forces over the enemy is now, as stated, approximately five to three, the changed circumstances under which the U.S. might participate in the defense of Indochina would very likely be accompanied by other factors which would effectively alter that ratio with respect to capability. A worsened anti-Communist position which would be a factor in causing U.S. intervention might quickly result in a lower capability or even in actual reduction in strength of the French Union forces. It would therefore be difficult to assess with any degree of accuracy the ratio in effect at the time of a necessary U.S. intervention.

Paragraph 2*d*: It would appear to be possible that the primary need at the time of a necessary U.S. intervention might be a tactical defensive operation with the limited U.S. troops available rather than an expanded and intensified training program for local forces.

Paragraph 2*g*: The use of atomic weapons whenever it is to our military advantage to do so might necessarily be coupled with a severe reaction by those Asian countries now attempting to maintain a neutralist posture. It should therefore be understood that, in our view, adverse political reactions should be expected from most of Asia to our use of such weapons.

Paragraphs 3 and 4: These are basically military matters to be worked out in military circles.

Paragraph 5: The circumstances under which the factors outlined in this paragraph are applicable are not clear. While we accept the thesis that the best military course for eventual victory is the development of effective native armed forces, it is unclear as to what the U.S. objective should be, compared with the unsuccessful French efforts. We understand approximately 5,000 French officers and NCO's are now engaging in a training function. We do not know if this training function is expected to continue at the same level of effectiveness. We believe that the relationship between any continuing French training function and a U.S. training mission should be carefully spelled out with respect to the distinction between their tasks as well as their control. We agree that firm requests from the French and Associated States are a prerequisite to American intervention.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA.

[2] *Ante*, p. 1590.

Paragraphs 6*a* and *b*: We believe that the command relationship between any U.S. naval and air force contributions should be carefully spelled out with respect to the command relationship to the Allied Commander in Chief. There would appear to be significant advantages to be gained (ignoring military requirements) if command of U.S. Naval and Air forces should remain with the U.S. and be considered as a contributory measure furnished in coordination with ground efforts which of course would be under the Allied Commander in Chief.

Paragraph 7: The implications of bombing supply lines inside China raises a multitude of political considerations as well as strategic military problems. The existence of the Sino–Soviet treaty and other factors must be considered. We feel that consideration of bombing Communist China, if a necessary part of the problem of U.S. military participation in Indochina, should be part of a larger strategic study and that our determination to do so or not be the result of such a larger study. This applies to factor under 2*f*.

Paragraph 8: From the political point of view it has been estimated that the fall of Indochina to Communist control would eventually result in the fall of the balance of Southeast Asia to Communist control. We are not sure if it is consistent with such an assessment to agree that the allocation of more than token U.S. forces would be a serious diversion of U.S. capabilities. While not arguing for the deployment of substantial U.S. forces to the area we believe that the concept outlined in paragraph 8 might more accurately be recast to indicate a planning ability to deploy in the area of Indochina sufficient forces to achieve our objective in Indochina. An extension of the war would necessarily call for a reassessment of such a decision. If the intervention of token U.S. forces in the area did not result in an extension of the war, it might be found that token U.S. forces were inadequate for the task. Under those circumstances it would appear they should be increased to a size to permit the successful completion of our mission.

751G.00/5–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, May 24, 1954—8 p. m.

4521. Repeated information Geneva 289, Saigon 543. Re Geneva's Secto 261, repeated Saigon 95, Paris 302[1] Embassy officer saw Ngo Dinh Diem today. Although obviously pleased re-establish contact US official, he was in such state excitement at prospect new responsibilities that much he said was vague, rambling and even unintelligible. His impression that movements followed by French and Viet Minh agents which had caused him insist on elaborate arrangements for meeting Embassy officer (contributed to nervous state). Nevertheless, he talked steadily for two hours, of which following are high points.

He was summoned May 14 from abbey in Bruges where then living to see Bao Dai Paris. Brother, Ngo Dinh Luyen, had acted as intermediary. Preliminary contacts successful with Bao Dai explaining need Diem and latter agreeing to re-enter political arena. Bao Dai proceeded Genva immediately thereafter and ordered Buu-Loc to return Saigon on grounds that deteriorating situation there required presence one of two men and Bao Dai had to remain France to direct Vietnam delegation Geneva. Although Buu-Loc could not categorically refuse order he employed delaying tactics to postpone departure in hopes that Bao Dai would change mind.

Instead Emperor ordered Nguyen De inform Buu-Loc he was dismissed. He did so by telephone from Evian to St. Julien and again instead of acting on instructions Buu-Loc delayed. When asked how this was possible Diem explained that Bao Dai was "weak", hated to make important decisions and even then could often be dissuaded from them later. No one knew this better or took greater advantage of it than Buu-Loc.

Bao Dai had, in meanwhile, decided send Diem to Saigon immediately re-explore possibilities form new government while at same time helping restore rapidly deteriorating situation Saigon. He gave Diem papers stating official purpose trip and Imperial sponsorship.

When Diem's new role became known to Buu-Loc he proceeded pay him court. He offered use official funds for trip Saigon, claimed to have instructed Quat give Diem carte blanche, etc. After coming Paris May 21 this purpose, Buu-Loc proceeded Cannes where Bao Dai had gone from Evian. He is there now "attempting to persuade Bao Dai to revoke his decisions".

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[1] Telegram Secto 261 from Geneva, May 20, reported that the U.S. Delegation had been approached by Ngo Dinh Luyen, who had indicated that his brother, Ngo Dinh Diem, was being considered by Bao Dai as a replacement for Premier Buu Loc. The delegation suggested that the Embassy in France contact Diem in a discreet manner to determine his views. For the memorandum of the conversation between Ngo Dinh Luyen and Under Secretary Smith, May 18, transmitted to Washington in telegram Secto 261, see vol. XVI, p. 843.

Diem leaves Wednesday night [2] by train for Cannes to consult with Bao Dai on Thursday prior to taking Friday's plane from Nice for Saigon. Fully intends carry out his part bargain although he admitted on questioning that Buu-Loc may succeed in changing Bao Dai's mind or at least getting him agree compromise. Diem stated that Buu-Loc and closest advisers, including Dac-Khe and Foreign Minister Dinh are concerned with only one thing—scraping bottom of every financial barrel in Vietnam and transferring proceeds to France before ship sinks. Buu-Loc has resided in France for years and both De and Dinh have French wives and intend to stay here. They are indulging in scandalous practices to line coffers including sending of many unnecessary Vietnamese officials to France on slightest pretext in order to establish reason for transferring large sums of money for their "maintenance". Diem claims Buu-Loc received million and half piasters from the Binh Xuyen when they were given office of Chief of Surete in Saigon. When we stated it had been rumored that Bao Dai had also received something Diem admitted it was probably true because Emperor although true patriot was so "weak" (faible).

As on past occasions, we were strongly impressed with Ngo's simplicity, naivete and honesty. He impresses one as a mystic who has just emerged from a religious retreat into the cold world which is, in fact, almost what he has done. He appears too unworldly and unsophisticated to be able to cope with the grave problems and unscrupulous people he will find in Saigon. Yet his apparent sincerity, patriotic fervor and honesty are refreshing by comparison and we are led to think that these qualities may outweigh his other deficiencies. The grossly unrealistic attitude to current problems he has displayed in past appears to have improved. Certainly he is much less emotionally anti-French than before and he referred to the true nature of the Viet Minh with a more realistic appreciation of factors involved than in past. He spoke of impossibility of collaborating with Viet Minh and of need of doing so with France, US and "our other allies". He referred with pride to the new Franco–Vietnamese relationship of equal states in voluntary association.

On balance we were favorably impressed but only in the realization that we are prepared to accept the seemingly ridiculous prospect that this Yogi-like mystic could assume the charge he is apparently about to undertake only because the standard set by his predecessors is so low.

We are seeing him again tomorrow.

DILLON

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[2] May 26.

751G.00/5-2554 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, May 25, 1954—11 a. m.

2526. Repeated information Geneva 150, Paris 892. Department for Secretary. Geneva for Under Secretary; Paris for Ambassador. I much appreciate Department's having repeated to me Paris telegram 4402 (Geneva 243) as set out Deptel 2376 to Saigon [1] and to have text of Secretary's reply as expressed in Deptel 4194 sent Paris (Geneva Tedul 101).[2]

I think problem of Vietnam is now not independence but existence. Vietnamese, who for so many years talked about independence and advocated various formulae against French, now have hot breath of Ho Chi Minh and Communist China on their necks. In consequence, ably reasoned argument re independence delineated by Ambassador Dillon is for moment secondary to main problem which, as he correctly intimates, is how to fill power vacuum once French Expeditionary Corps leaves this peninsula and how therefore to establish a truly powerful Vietnamese National Army.

One method of establishing such an army would be adopt Vietnamese armistice proposals which demand that Viet Minh troops be incorporated in Vietnamese National Army. This would indeed result in a powerful Vietnamese Army but it would be Communist-controlled (Cf. Embtel 2443).[3] Another method is for French to continue their training of Vietnamese recruits which thus far has proved of indifferent success and for Vietnamese Government by press gang methods to enforce its currently null decrees on conscription. As an example of complete failure of Vietnamese mobilization measures, Saigon is presently almost bereft of day laborers because they are hiding out in fear of being drafted into army.

Third possibility is completely to reorganize training methods in Vietnamese Army in hope that General O'Daniel or some other US expert will be able to create combat-worthy soldiers inspired by willingness to fight (Cf. Embtel 2499).[4] Here, however, we run into basic difficulty of Vietnam which is absence of leadership by Bao Dai. Certainly no Vietnamese troops will charge across the field behind the portly figure of Buu Loc, nor will they fight for an absentee Emperor.

Given this situation it seems to me that suggestion set out in FYI section of Tedul 110 (repeated Paris 4225, Saigon 2385)[5] has merit.

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[1] For text of telegram 4402 from Paris, May 17, see p. 1574.

[2] For text of telegram 4194 to Paris, May 21, see p. 1594.

[3] Dated May 18, p. 1579.

[4] Dated May 22, p. 1599.

[5] In the reference telegram, dated May 22, the Department of State discussed the policy of the United States with regard to Bao Dai and the question of the creation of a Vietnamese provisional national assembly; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 892.

All Vietnamese politicians with exception of Nguyen De have in recent months been insisting on need for truly representative National Assembly and on requirement for a constitution. If Bao Dai would return and establish such a constituent assembly along lines set out referenced telegram, it would be more convincing proof to Vietnamese that they were independent than any treaty granted by French.[6]

Whether this alone would suffice to give morale to Vietnamese National Army is a question I do not feel qualified to answer from present evidence. I do not think Vietnamese National Army will fight better than South Korean Army after K-MAAG training, nor that it will become a ROK-type army unless there is some stiffening of foreign divisions alongside, whether American or French.

Thus, although it is desirable as an eventual goal that French Expeditionary Corps and Commander-in-Chief be withdrawn from Vietnam as suggested Paris telegram 4402 to be replaced by a strong Vietnamese National Army, I do not think that in terms of practical power relationships we can consider this an immediate possibility. The Vietnamese left to themselves will become almost instant prey to Viet Minh or to Chinese Communist infiltration. Possibly current five-power staff talks in Washington will be addressed to problem of filling this power gap (perhaps with participation of neighboring Asian contingents) until Vietnamese National Army becomes a combat-worthy instrument. Interdependence in immediate future is more important than independence.

McCLINTOCK

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[6] In telegram 2530 from Saigon, May 25, McClintock discussed the danger that a constituent assembly might be used by the Viet Minh to assume power and noted that such a body must not be allowed to become a tool of Bao Dai and his advisers. (751G.00/5-2554)

751G.00/5-2554 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Philippines (Lacy) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET MANILA, May 25, 1954—9 p. m.

2670. Sent priority Saigon 278 repeated information Department 2670, Paris 20, Geneva 6. For McClintock from Meloy. General O'Daniel held 2-hour meeting with Defense Secretary Wilson evening 24 May Sangley Point. Admiral Stump (CINCPAC), Vice Admiral Phillips (Commander First Fleet) also present, as well as Wilson party including Navy Under Secretary Gates.

O'Daniel presented briefing on organization and problems MAAG Indochina, outline enemy dispositions and capabilities, his own estimate military situation to effect if Viet Minh attack in force in delta within next 30 days, French will be unable hold more than small

Haiphong beachhead without substantial and immediate reinforcement. O'Daniel reviewed his 22 May conversation with General Ely in Saigon as reported Saigon's 2499 to Department repeated Paris 885, Geneva 144[1] and set forth his recommendations which had already been telegraphed Department Army following 23 May conference with Stump. In summary, recommendations were:

1. Time of essence. US must immediately participate training Vietnamese National Army and must train units of division size.
2. US officer advisors should be placed with components of divisions thus trained and should remain with them in combat. US must have share planning and operational control these forces.
3. Inter-governmental agreement must be reached soon as possible to this effect and MAAG's terms reference changed accordingly. MAAG should move into this field far as possible immediately without awaiting final agreement be reached.
4. Vietnamese Government must take strong measures conscript necessary manpower.
5. Top priority should be given MAAG's requirements including airlift of supplies.

Secretary Wilson inquired whether or not General Navarre should be removed. O'Daniel said yes. I interjected supporting statement Embassy Saigon believed Navarre would never willingly accept or cooperate with O'Daniel's desire form divisions. Admiral Stump agreed, recalling Navarre's earlier strong public statements he "would turn in his suit" if US participated in training. I recalled Embassy Saigon had reported March 15, two days after Viet Minh attack Dien Bien Phu began, Navarre had told De Jean situation was lost. This did not sound like confident, aggressive leader who was needed.

Secretary Wilson inquired possibilities Guillaume succeeding Navarre as he understood Guillaume had been freed his duties in Morocco. As matter personal opinion I said I agreed Guillaume had reputation aggressive leadership O'Daniel could verify from personal experience, but felt before rushing into urging appointment Guillaume we should remember incident when Guillaume publicly berated newly-arrived American Consul Rabat. Guillaume had accused Consul Rabat receiving and listening to Moroccan nationalist leaders who had come to Consulate. Guillaume told Consul if he wanted information on conditions Morocco he should come to Information Officer Guillaume's staff. I felt this might bode ill for Guillaume's attitude toward O'Daniel's participation in training, operations and planning. Secretary Wilson, Gates and Stump did not agree and stated they would have done same thing Guillaume's place.

Later in discussion I again interjected saying McClintock had authorized me speak for Embassy Saigon and there several political aspects Indochina situation I thought Secretary Wilson should have in mind. I proceeded describe political situation as reported recent Saigon telegrams and spoke along following lines. Embassy Saigon strongly supports General O'Daniel's recommendations as to training Nationalist Army but is important remember certain factors which make us view picture occasionally with less optimism. There time when political deterioration becomes disintegration. We believe that time reached and passed in Vietnam. Vacuum of political authority exists Vietnam with absence Bao Dai and most of cabinet. Without strong central authority would be very difficult raise manpower O'Daniel will need for formation Nationalist Army and men drafted by press-gang methods may be questionable material for training.

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[1] Dated May 22, p. 1599.

Indochina cannot be considered as whole, but three states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia must be viewed as separate entities posing special problems. Vietnamese most war-like with Tonkinese in north heading list. Laos and Cambodia sharing Buddhist pacifist feelings not war-like nations.

Although sharing common danger Communist conquest with Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos consider conflict be chiefly problem of Vietnam with which they not concerned so long as Viet Minh remain without their borders.

Embassy Saigon agrees with O'Daniel time fast running out. Our view there three things must be done:

(1) French must be persuaded hold line. This applies not only holding Delta, where danger immediately threatens, but also to serving as screen behind which O'Daniel must train National armies. By O'Daniel's own plan first divisions could not be formed and ready until November or December. This indicates extended period French effort.

(2) There must be immediate US participation training National armies which necessitates US participation planning and operational control if these troops to be used effectively.

(3) Strong and vigorous leadership must be re-established Vietnam, for only by re-establishment central government authority can people have confidence in government, country or selves. Without strong central authority manpower cannot be conscripted for O'Daniel's divisions. Through all of this flows important corollary that psychologically people must be given confidence and something fight for.

Secretary Wilson said he thought it most important realize differences attitudes and cultural histories of Indochinese. I pointed out there were elements strength such as firm administration and leadership of Tri in north and reminded Secretary decision had been received arm Tri's militia and that O'Daniel's staff even now in Tonkin examining situation. In Cambodia, new Defense Minister seemed strong figure who could lend stability to shaky nation.

Under Secretary Gates expressed concern remaining time insufficient take necessary action. Secretary Wilson took problem under consideration.

LACY

Editorial Note

By letter of May 25, 1954, Robert B. Anderson, the Acting Secretary of Defense, transmitted to the Secretary of State the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the defense of Southeast Asia in the event of the loss of Indochina to the Communists. For text of Anderson's letter and the attached memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dated May 21, 1954, see volume XII.

Editorial Note

In response to questions at his news conference of May 25, 1954, the Secretary of State commented on the possibility of United States intervention in Southeast Asia and particularly in Indochina. He reiterated that the United States would not intervene unilaterally but only as part of collective defense measures in accordance with the principles of the United Nations. He also said that the United States did not have before it any request from the French Government for intervention in Indochina, although there had been conversations to explore the circumstances under which intervention might be possible. Secretary Dulles emphasized the point that any such action would have to be sanctioned by Congress.

The Secretary's remarks were issued as Department of State Press Release No. 284 of May 25, 1954; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 7, 1954, pages 862–864.

751G.00/5-2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, May 26, 1954—1 p. m.

4538. Repeated information Geneva 295, Saigon 545. Re Embtel 4521 repeated Geneva 287 [*289*] Saigon 543.[1] We saw Ngo Dinh Diem again last night after announcement had been made that Buu Loc was returning to Saigon.

Diem stated that Bao Dai had sent "family emissary" to Diem to report that Buu Loc had now agreed to resigning and facilitating formation of new government by Diem. As this might be long drawn out process and as immediate need was so great Buu Loc was returning immediately to Saigon. Diem himself leaves today for Cannes to spend some days with Bao Dai and thereafter plans tentatively leave for Saigon from Paris June 1. We will see him again when he passes through en route from Cannes to Saigon next week.

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[1] Dated May 24, p. 1608.

When we inquired whether Diem could trust Buu Loc to carry out his part of the bargain, he stated that, although he did not trust him, he did not think he would dare defy Bao Dai. It was recalled that both Huu and Tam took considerable time getting out of office after being given walking papers by Bao Dai.

We asked Diem's opinion of statement reported in press made by Buu Loc in Geneva following interview with Under Secretary.[2] He was generally in favor of immediate signature of two basic treaties of independence and association, but thought there might have to be minor adjustments made to texts. Vietnam wished to be member French Union but wanted it to be clear that she was joining fully of own volition and after having been granted full independence (which of course she retained even though a member of Union). Minor adjustments to texts would accomplish this purpose.

He agreed with proposal that US undertake training Vietnamese forces. But he had strong reservations on advisability organizing elected National Assembly. It would be impossible to risk elections for the foreseeable future and even if an assembly were created by "designation" it would be a very risky business and the authority of the Assembly would have to be strictly limited. When we suggested the Assembly might be a constitutional Assembly and empowered to act only in advisory capacity, he thought this good suggestion.

In response our question as to extent French were participating in or aware of plans for formation Diem Government he stated that they suspected that something was in wind but had not been informed. He himself believed as he hoped Bao Dai did that nothing should be done without full knowledge and cooperation of French and he intended to proceed along these lines after consulting with Bao Dai. His own relations with French authorities Paris were excellent although he had some reservations about DeJean.

Finally he spoke at some length about Colonel Vy whom Bao Dai had sent to see him yesterday and whom he described as No. 2 to Hinh. Diem intended use him in high position National Army after dismissing Hinh whom he described as "factitious Frenchman". If he found he needed experienced high-ranking officer to command National Army he would hire a good foreign one, French or US but not take an imitation who was no good anyway.

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[2] The meeting between Under Secretary Smith and Prince Buu Loc on May 25 is described in telegram Secto 298 from Geneva of the same date; for text, see vol. xvi, p. 914.

DILLON

751G.11/5–2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, May 26, 1954—5 p. m.

4542. Repeated information Geneva 297, Saigon 546. Re Tedul 110, repeated Paris 4225, Saigon 2385.[1] We heartily concur with Department's decision carry on with Bao Dai solution, at least for time being and in spite of serious shortcomings of the man. Establishment of truly nationalist Vietnamese Government is absolute prerequisite to restoration even small degree political stability at present time to say nothing of future progress. Yet, we cannot visualize, from practical aspect, establishment and functioning of such government without Bao Dai or some other superior authority to serve as conciliator of the vastly different regional and political groups which would have to be represented in such a government if it were to be truly representative of country as a whole. Furthermore, the unfortunate fact is that the Vietnamese people require such authority. Things simply do not work unless someone is issuing the orders and enforcing them.

In our opinion, reasons which led us to accept Bao Dai solution when it was first devised by France at about time of the Baie d'Along agreements are still valid. Institution of the monarchy remains a deeply inbred tradition in Vietnamese life, in spite of the manner in which it has been discredited by Bao Dai both prior to the Viet Minh rebellion and since. It constitutes a valuable asset which, if properly exploited, can pay great dividends. No question but that Bao Dai, by virtue of the traditional symbolism of office he occupies, has an authority which does not exist in any other part of our side of the Bamboo Curtain in Vietnam. Vietnamese conceive of the monarchy as something removed from and superior to everyday petty problems of life. Advantage of this fact, in that it enhances the authority of the Chief of State as supreme arbitrator, more than compensates for Bao Dai's abuse in making it serve as an excuse for his own lassitude and indulgence. If there were a substitute for him we should seriously consider a change but there is none and we must make use of what we have.

Moreover, in our opinion, we have never really put Bao Dai to the good use of which he and the office he occupies are capable. Steps outlined by Department in reference telegram and now being put into action by Under Secretary are, we believe, in right direction. In considering manner in which he could be put to best use, we consider it of supreme importance that nothing be done to give Bao Dai or the French the impression that this is inauguration of new policy designed to exclude the French. This impression could be easily acquired by both sides and would be detrimental to our objectives at both ends if for different reasons.

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[1] See footnote 5, p. 1610.

Although we agree with the need to establish a provisional national assembly on the argument that it is required as a symbol of national independence, we retain the reservations we have acquired as a result of past experience with "congresses" and "assemblies" in Vietnam and, therefore, hope that the functions of the national assembly will, for some time and at least until the Vietnamese Government is firmly established, be limited to constituent and consultative, rather than legislative powers.

We have never questioned Bao Dai being a patriotic Vietnamese but we do not believe that French have prevented him from playing more effective part as Chief of State. Bao Dai has chronic habit of blaming French for his own failings. Greatest French mistake with regard to Bao Dai has been to fail to push him into action and, consequently, to have permitted him to indulge his own weaknesses. But his deficiencies are inbred and not the result of influence of France or anyone else. As former High Commissioner Pignon often said, "there was little criticism of what Bao Dai did (politically)—it is just that he didn't do anything often enough". The point is to get Bao Dai to go to work and the United States should be able to help considerably in this task, both because of the position of special influence we occupy in the Imperial eye, and because we can apply the same methods which the French have used, but we hope, more efficiently.

Without getting into question of specific means to be employed, we think one of the main weapons to use in driving Bao Dai into action is control of his Exchequer. Nothing impresses him as much as gold and we should endeavor to arrive at arrangement with the French on controlling that portion his income we can in order to enforce our objectives.

We shall not attempt pass judgment on specific method dealing with question provisional assembly, but agree its stated purpose should be to write a constitution, and if we find that this creates difficulties, we should be prepared to reconsider subject for it is possible that the drafting of a workable constitution for Vietnam will present great difficulties to say nothing of those of governing the country constitutionally.

We are encouraged by present indications that Ngo Dinh Diem is to be brought back into public life as Prime Minister. Even with his personal limitations, he is step in right direction and diametric change from prototype of suave Europeanized money-seeking dilettante represented by Buu Loc, Tran Van Huu and General Xuan,[2] all of whom have failed so miserably.

We agree that under no circumstances should we commit ourselves irrevocably to Bao Dai or any other particular reform in Vietnam including eventual establishment of permanent assembly. We may find envisaged provisional assembly incapable of carrying on even its limited function. In the meanwhile, Bao Dai is essential to us for foreseeable future, and having recognized this fact, we should direct our efforts to putting this asset to good use with, at all times, the knowledge and cooperation of the French. The combination of their experience and our means should yield good results.

Dillon

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[2] Gen. Nguyen Van Xuan, former President of Cochin China, 1947, and of the Central Provisional Government of Vietnam, 1948.

751G.00/5–2454 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET Washington, May 26, 1954—7 : 33 p. m.

4272. We have given consideration (Embtel 4514, repeated Geneva 287, Saigon 542)[2] to question of further clarification of independence of Associated States and following views should guide your discussions with French:

1. While fully aware of importance of juridical and constitutional factors in establishment of permanent and complete independence of Vietnam, it seems to me what is primarily needed now is something which will have immediate and convincing impact on world opinion and above all on Vietnamese themselves. We cannot wait for abolition of all deep-rooted abuses and extra-territorial privileges in times like these. We can, however, attempt have it made unmistakably clear that the Treaty of Independence between France and Vietnam represents full and unqualified commitment on part of France which will be carried out in practice.

2. Our present thinking is that in order achieve this, certain declarations and measures are required in immediate future, both by France and by other countries associated in regional grouping for collective defense. United States, in addition to such appropriate statements as might be made by President at time of his going to Congress for

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[1] Drafted by Tyler of WE. Repeated to Geneva as telegram Tosec 269 and to Saigon as telegram 2418.

[2] Dated May 24, p. 1604.

authority to intervene, might join with other countries concerned in a formal pledge of fulfillment of full independence and sovereignty provided by Article I of Treaty of Independence. This statement, couched in form of a common declaration of purpose, would have to be simple and explicit so there would be no room for doubt as to validity of pledge or as to intentions of countries participating in it.

3. Following represents certain minimum measures which we believe French should take now, and which we feel will not place government in more difficult position than it is already:

a. France and Vietnam should sign draft treaties promptly.

b. At moment of signature, President of Republic, in his capacity as President of French Union, should make statement to effect that Union is composed of equal and sovereign states.

c. A declaration that French will withdraw their expeditionary force from Indochinese states at earliest practicable date after end of hostilities, consistent with France's obligations to Associated States, unless invited by respective governments of Associated States to maintain their forces. (*Comment:* We consider this to be at heart of any action French could take to convince world opinion they are in earnest. We feel such declaration should be made at actual time of signing or at least immediately after. Would appreciate your views as how and by whom this could be most effectively made.) This provision would not prejudice any base agreements which might be reached with Associated States. If United States or any other forces have been committed, we and any other countries would join in or make similar declaration.

4. Unless above are followed promptly by concrete actions which bear out professed intentions of good faith, hoped-for favorable reaction will not take place, and disappointment will set in correspondingly quickly. We suggest therefore that following measures be taken simultaneously or as soon as practical:

a. Participation of Associated States in programming all aid and direct receipt of military matériel aid. (This might require eventual renegotiation of pentapartite military agreement, but should not delay implementation.)

b. French should promptly find specific ways of giving Associated States, and particularly Vietnamese Ministry of Defense and Vietnam national army greater sense of participation in measures required for defense of their territory. We conceive such participation as being progressive in character.

5. Fundamental to problem is establishment at earliest date possible of representative and authentic nationalist governments. We would hope insofar as Vietnam concerned that French would join with us in impressing Bao Dai with necessity adopting prompt and effective measures to this end.

6. Furthermore, we believe series of measures could be taken locally, even in advance of full implementation Treaties, which should have

favorable public effect in Associated States. These could take form of liberalization existing Franco-Associated States accords in such manner as to attain some of objectives toward which we are working. Owing to rapid military and political developments in Associated States, we are unable specify at this time exactly what these measures may be, but believe Embassy Saigon and Commissariat General in consultation may be able make appropriate recommendations to Department and Paris.[3]

DULLES

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[3] In telegram 4562 from Paris, May 27, Ambassador Dillon reported that he had communicated the contents of this message to Alexandre Parodi, Secretary General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who had stated the belief that the greatest stumbling block to full U.S.-French agreement had now been removed. (751G.00/5-2754)

751G.5/5-2654

Memorandum by the Regional Planning Adviser, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Ogburn), to the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Drumright)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 26, 1954.

Subject: Presidential Message on Indochina [1]

The argument presented in the draft Presidential message informing Congress of the Administration's decision to contribute American armed forces to Indochina "sufficient to assist the French Union forces to restore peace and order " at the cost of possible general war, rests upon three main contentions, all specious. These are as follows:

1. That Vietnam has been the victim of "implacable aggression". The statement is made that "if not stopped [in] [2] Indochina as it was in Korea, Red Chinese forces will roll on to menace and overpower new victims". The fact is that the Communist forces in Vietnam are Vietnamese. The war there is a civil war. There has been no aggression in Vietnam as there was in Korea. If there had been, the presumption must be that the situation would have been reported to the UN when it first developed.

2. That "the French Union forces have been fighting for eight long years to bring peace with freedom to Indochina". The fact is that even as of today, the French have not promised to give freedom to Indochina. For the first four years of this war, the French did not afford the Vietnamese the opportunity to enlist even with a nominally autonomous Vietnamese government. It was not until 1950 that a government under Bao Dai was set up. Until then, the Vietnamese had a choice of

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[1] The specific draft under reference has not been identified. A draft Presidential message was being prepared in connection with NSC 5421 which consisted of studies on aspects of possible U.S. intervention in Indochina. For table of contents from NSC 5421, June 1, and additional information on this project, see p. 1649.

[2] Brackets in the source text.

siding with the French or siding with Ho Chi Minh. Under those conditions, this Government quite properly refused to provide the French with any ammunition or arms, being convinced that the French purpose was essentially to suppress the independence movement in Vietnam.

3. That US intervention will restore peace and bring freedom to Vietnam. In the first place, our intelligence estimate is that US intervention will bring not peace but will bring Chinese Communist intervention. This will mean general war with Communist China in which—and again I quote from our intelligence estimate—the Soviet Union will not stand by and allow the Chinese Communist regime to be destroyed. As for our bringing freedom to Vietnam, it is impossible to speak of American troops as bringing freedom to another people when the great preponderance of that people would be bitterly opposed to the appearance of American troops in their country. What this paper is talking about is "liberation" in the Communist sense.

To my mind it is impossible to produce a good statement based on false premises and accordingly it would seem to me futile to attempt to improve this paper merely by superficial changes in drafting. At the same time, I must admit I can find no honest grounds on which the sending of American troops to Indochina, and the sacrifice of thousands or perhaps many more lives, for ends that I believe would prove worse than futile, could be justified.

751G.00/5–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, May 27, 1954—6 p. m.

4566. Repeated information Geneva 305, Saigon 550. Eyes only Secretary; Geneva eyes only Under Secretary; Saigon eyes only Chargé. Pass Defense for Department Army for Ridgway. This is joint Embassy–Trapnell message. After arriving Paris, Trapnell called first on Ambassador for general background discussion and subsequently on General Gruenther for same purpose. He was originally scheduled to call on Laniel May 28 before seeing Ely but because of Prime Minister's preoccupation with Cabinet meetings and other urgent business meeting was postponed. Trapnell accompanied by Ambassador seeing Laniel at latter's home tomorrow morning. Meanwhile Laniel suggested that Trapnell make direct contact with Ely. This was done this morning when Trapnell, accompanied by Embassy Officer, had hour and half interview with Ely, accompanied by Colonel Brohon.

As conversation opened, it became apparent that Ely was not fully aware of reason behind Trapnell's presence in Paris. After this was explained Ely launched into a general review of the Indochina situation giving particular emphasis to following points:

1. He recounted content of talks he had had in Indochina with O'Daniel. He was agreeable to principle of American instruction Vietnamese forces but not entirely in accord with O'Daniel's proposal that national army be reorganized on divisional basis. He believed that divisional units were perhaps too weighty and that lighter units of perhaps 6, 7 or 8 battalions per division were more practicable. Yet, he did not wish to press this point as he regarded it as a detail which could be worked out subsequently. He pointed out that if O'Daniel's concept was followed and US instructor-advisers remained with units upon completion of training, they would have to accompany units into battle and, therefore, major question of whether US prepared to participate in combat operations would arise. Only alternate to this would be replacement of US instructor-advisers by French as units were prepared to enter combat. This would be unsatisfactory because training and advising methods of French and Americans were dissimilar.

2. Ely stated that O'Daniel had presented an operational plan for continuing the war but that he found it unrealistic on basis that it gave priority to operations in the south while the principal and immediate threat is in the north.

3. Ely referred to increasing frequency of American criticism of French conduct of war. He explained that it was easy to criticize *post facto* and when things went wrong. As Trapnell knew, the war in Indochina was of a very special nature and it was unfair for people who perhaps didn't understand this fact as well as he and Trapnell to criticize. It was useless to compare the wars in Korea and Indochina; they were entirely different. He hoped that Trapnell could use his influence to reduce the degree of present US criticism of past and present French performance in Indochina in the interests of good Franco-American working relations in the important joint tasks at hand.

4. At about this stage of the conversation, Ely remarked that it was virtually impossible to discuss specific military questions in Indochina without getting into the major political questions including the possibility of US intervention, the prospects for a Pacific pact and the whole question of where the defense of Southeast Asia was to take place and by whom. Trapnell referred to his terms of reference[1]

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[1] General Trapnell received the terms of reference for his mission by letter of May 14 from H. Struve Hensel, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (signing for Acting Secretary Anderson). Trapnell was informed that his participation in conversations with French representatives implied no future commitment of U.S. forces. He was instructed to deal only with military matters relating to the regroupment of French forces. Ambassador Dillon was responsible for other aspects of the problem. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 110)

which prevented him from discussing other than specific military questions, particularly that of the regrouping of existing forces in Indochina for the defense of the Delta.

5. When Trapnell asked Ely what the immediate military prospects were in the Delta, he replied that the five Viet Minh divisions released from Dien Bien Phu were moving rapidly forward and should be at the Delta perimeter between the 10th and 15th of June. Normally at that season they would return to their regrouping areas for rest, "self-criticism" and general revision. Whether they will do so this year or not is still uncertain, although there are indications at the moment that some Viet Minh forces are moving to regrouping areas.

6. When Trapnell asked what Ely was doing to regroup his forces for the defense of the Delta he replied two basic things: First, removing units from pacification and other static missions to the Delta to become part of mobile defense groups; secondly, he was recovering units from inactive posts in Laos, Central Annam and other areas for transfer to the Delta to become part of these same mobile forces.

7. Ely's plan for the defense of the Delta centers around the defense of what he termed the Hanoi–Haiphong axis. No specific detail was given as to the number of units, where they were to be retained, or the exact area to be defended. He was particularly and, no doubt, designedly pessimistic on the aspects for the defense of this axis, stating that if Hanoi had to be surrendered French Union Forces would move to Haiphong, and if Haiphong were lost they would at least be able to move out from there to "possibly another stand in the south". This, too, depended entirely, according to Ely, on what was decided about US intervention and other pending high-level political decisions.

8. Trapnell pointed out that French superiority in aviation and armor could be extremely effective against a Viet Minh coordinated attack in the Delta because of the terrain. Ely not only admitted this fact but stated that it "is our trump card".

9. When Trapnell pressed Ely for an opinion as to what was required between the period of the immediate threat and the period when, it was hoped, the Vietnamese army would be on an effective footing, Ely replied that the General was obviously thinking of how many US Marines would be required to assure the defense of the Delta. He went on to say that in his opinion, if one or two US Marine divisions intervened "there would be no problem".

Comment: The conversation was largely unsatisfactory from our standpoint because our efforts to obtain specific commitments from Ely, including any statement regarding French intentions concerning despatch of reinforcements from metropolitan France and North Africa to Indochina, were unsuccessful. Nor did Ely appear particularly interested in Trapnell's recommendations concerning the redeployment of forces. We attribute this to the fact that Ely is still busily engaged in consultations with the Prime Minister, Pleven, and the High Council of National Defense, and was probably being very careful not to make any commitments which had not yet been cleared by the government. He was aware that Trapnell is seeing Laniel tomorrow morning with the Ambassador, at which time more specific matters may be discussed. In the meanwhile, Ely requested that Trapnell continue his conversations with Colonel Brohon for the time being and that, of course, Ely would be seeing Trapnell again after the interview with Laniel.

DILLON

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"

Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] May 27, 1954.

Subject: JCS memorandum of May 20 concerning U.S. participation in Indochina

I. *Introduction*

1. Subject memorandum describes U.S. participation as involving primarily limited U.S. air and naval forces, with the French agreeing not to withdraw their forces from Indochina, the U.S. assuming responsibility for training indigenous forces, a command structure for united action being established, atomic weapons being used where this was militarily advantageous, and attacks possibly to be mounted on Viet Minh sources of supply in Communist China.

II. *Force Requirements*

2. It is doubted that a U.S. participation which was of the limited character described above could achieve its objective.

a. The expanded Vietnamese armies could not be raised without a change in the present Vietnamese political atmosphere, which will require measures likely to induce the French progressively to curtail their ground forces in Indochina, regardless of commitments they might have made in seeking U.S. participation in the Indochina war. This curtailment would probably proceed more rapidly than the expansion of effective Vietnamese armies.*

b. Even if satisfactory political conditions could be established at this late date, it is doubtful that the Vietnamese would contribute greatly increased effective manpower until they saw greater hope of eventual victory against Viet Minh than at present. Such hope would have to be based on evident and significant Viet Minh defeats. The present balance of military power in Indochina is such that French Union forces are unable to prevent Viet Minh victories, let alone inflict evident and significant Viet Minh defeats. The introduction of limited US air and naval forces into Indochina would not so reverse the military balance of power as to cause the Viet Minh to suffer such defeats. This would require the introduction of increased ground forces which, under the assumed circumstances, could only come—in any large measure—from the US.

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[1] A typewritten notation on the source text indicates that Bowie showed this memorandum to Secretary Dulles.

*It is significant that, even *in extremis* the French are still unwilling to send conscripts to Indochina. [Footnote in the source text.]

3. The use of nuclear weapons in Indochina would hardly reduce the ground force requirement in this area. Major targets would only be presented in Viet Minh areas if Communist troops and supplies were massed for an operation like the assault on Dien Bien Phu. The Viet Minh, in waging war against the French with growing effectiveness for eight years, mounted only one other operation which might be remotely compared to that against Dien Bien Phu. The use of nuclear weapons would also cause an adverse Vietnamese reaction, which might inhibit the formation of indigenous armies, and seriously adverse reactions in Asian neutral nations.

4. The JCS paper appears to assume that the commitment of United States forces would inevitably be countered by Chinese Communist retaliation. This is probable but not certain. If this should not be the case, the possibility of securing Indochina would be enhanced and would warrant the commitment of something more than token forces, in view of the vital importance of Southeast Asia to "the security interests of the United States."

5. While ground force requirements in Indochina might be reduced by attacks on supply sources in Communist China, this would, of course, increase still further the probability of Chinese Communist intervention which would totally transform the character of the war. In the event of such intervention, the US would have to deploy very much greater forces to wage the war; it is unclear whether a non-Communist position in the Indochinese peninsula could then be maintained or re-established without military pressure on mainland China which would so endanger the security of the Peiping regime as to bring the Sino-Soviet alliance into play.

III. *Training*

6. As to the US training responsibilities, we believe that US methods evolved in Korea and elsewhere could eventually be advantageously employed, *provided* that the political foundations for our intervention and subsequent action were sound. If this political preparation had not had a beneficial impact upon the outlook and *esprit* of officer candidates, we believe that assembly line techniques might only

produce less reliable company officers more rapidly. The mere appearance in the field of a US training mission would not automatically produce Vietnamese political confidence in the US and in independence, unless it were part of a generally new approach in all fields—political, economic and military.

7. As we understand the JCS paper, the ground fighting would be chiefly done by French Union forces with only a token US contribution. If this is correct, it raises a question about the efficacy of the training mission. Tactics and organization are now on French models; we would either have to continue to teach in the French manner through French intermediaries or revise the system in mid-campaign to fit the practices of an American army which, under the JCS plan, would not be present in the theater.

IV. *Command Relationship*

We believe that the command relationship between any US naval and air force contributions should be carefully spelled out with respect to the command relationship to the Allied Commander in Chief. There would appear to us to be significant advantages to be gained in having command of US naval and air forces remaining with the US. If the JCS assumption of token US land contributions should prove unsound, then the suggestion that US forces remain under French command would have to be reviewed, not only because the ground forces would no longer be so predominantly French Union, but also because our intervention would have a better chance politically in Asia and the United States under US rather than French command.

Editorial Note

From 9:15 a.m. to 10:55 a.m., May 28, 1954, the President met with the following individuals in his office: John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State; Robert B. Anderson, the Deputy Secretary of Defense; Admiral Arthur W. Radford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; General Matthew B. Ridgway, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; Admiral Robert B. Carney, Chief of Naval Operations; General Nathan F. Twining, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force; General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commandant of the United States Marine Corps; Douglas MacArthur II, Counselor of the Department of State; Robert R. Bowie, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Department of State; and Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The subject of discussion was the defense of Southeast Asia in light of the situation in Indochina. The question of five-power staff talks, aspects of the Indochina problem, and the

Geneva Conference were among the matters considered. At the meeting, Secretary Dulles presented a memorandum on the defense of Southeast Asia in the event of the loss of Indochina to the Communists.

For texts of Cutler's notes on the meeting, the Secretary of State's memorandum, and related documentation, see volume XII.

751G.00/5-2854 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, May 28, 1954—6 p. m.

2574. Repeated information Paris 911, Geneva 165. DeJean told me yesterday he had attended a meeting of Franco-Vietnamese High Military Committee that morning. Decision had been reached to use all French Expeditionary Corps troops as a mobile striking force (this followed advice of General Ely) and to utilize Vietnamese forces for static duty. In particular practically all of south and central Vietnam will be entrusted to charge of Vietnamese National Army.

It has been decided to hold parallelogram in delta bounded by Hanoi and Haiphong to west and east and by Canal des Rapides and Canal des Bambous to north and south. Area south of Bambous Canal will be defended by Vietnamese National Army.

DeJean said that according to Ely's estimate reinforcements of at least three divisions would be needed if Indochina could be held until December. Ely's immediate recommendation (cf. Embtel 2520)[1] was to bring out one Metropolitan division which would be used for static duty in Vietnam. However, neither he nor DeJean seemed sanguine at prospect of French Government releasing two additional divisions.

I told DeJean that last week in conversation with Korean General Choi latter had remarked that offer of Korean Government to send one or two divisions to Indochina still held good. However, Choi insisted that these troops must be maintained in divisional units and not intermingled with other forces here and said that of course necessary sea lift would have to be provided by US. DeJean, whose mood is now that of man grasping at straws, wondered if there might be some serious possibility of utilization Korea forces here. He likewise asked me if I thought there was any possibility of US intervention by air and naval arms, even though use of US ground forces was out of question.

DeJean said he could smell another Munich in the making at Geneva and if this did develop West would find itself so divided that Communists would have won a world-wide victory. He thought that since balance of forces here was so nearly even and so little in effect was needed to redress balance in West's favor, utmost should be done to find necessary reinforcements. He did not however seem to think they would be provided by France.

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[1] In telegram 2520 from Saigon, May 24, not printed, McClintock reported that according to a French source, General Ely would recommend that one French metropolitan division be sent to Indochina. (751G.00/5-2454)

McClintock

751G.00/5-2854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, May 28, 1954—8 p. m.

4580. Repeated information priority Geneva 309. Limit distribution. I saw Schumann this afternoon and gave him information contained in Deptel 4286.[1] He made careful note of points 1 and 2, and said he felt personally that they were entirely satisfactory. He did not get into any discussion of details so subject matter in FYI portion of Deptel 4286 never came up. Schumann also told me that he had been informed by Parodi regarding my discussion with him yesterday and that Schumann again personally was very pleased with the information in Deptel 4272.[2]

While we do not as yet have formal French answer on either of these two Deptels, Schumann said that only things that now remained unsettled were military conversations to arrange details of training, command structure, and war plans. He said that French were most anxious to get at these conversations immediately. He then read me portion of telegram from Bidault in which Bidault said that an increased show of Franco-American solidarity in Indochina was now vitally necessary in order to have any hope of sound progress at Geneva. As possible concrete steps Bidault suggested:

1. US promptly take over responsibility for training Vietnamese National Army.
2. US agree to provide assistance toward improving airfields in Indochina for use of jet aircraft.

Schumann told me that at Cabinet meeting this morning it was decided to leave to Pleven's discretion decision as to whether Ely or Valluy should represent France at 5-power military discussions opening in Washington next week. In view of French understanding that Radford will not be present for these meetings Ely has told Trapnell that he is disinclined to go himself. However, Schumann today asked whether it would be possible to undertake these Franco-US military negotiations in Washington at the same time or parallel with 5-power military talks. If so, he said he felt it was most important that Ely attend and he would so inform Pleven, who, he was sure, would agree. He requested a prompt answer so French could take necessary decision as to whether or not to send Ely. He said French had been anxious for some time to initiate these military discussions and he hoped that US was now ready and willing for them to begin.

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[1] Telegram 4286 to Paris, May 27, not printed, contained suggestions for meeting the French requirement that an agreement for joint action must allow France some flexibility in regard to the withdrawal of its forces from Indochina in the event of a substantial increase in the strength of the Vietnamese National Army. (751G.00/5-2254)

[2] Dated May 26, p. 1618.

During course of my visit he had a telephone conversation with Massigli in London regarding a telegram which Massigli had sent reporting on British attitude regarding Southeast Asia Pact. Schumann showed me the telegram, key portion of which indicated British reluctance, as expressed by Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick[3] to undertake any sort of military operations in any portion of Indochina, as they thought that all Indochina, including Cambodia, was infested with Communists and so it was not practical for military operations. Schumann was quite upset by this telegram which he made clear to Massigli on the telephone, saying it was now clear that British were only interested in defending Southeast Asia when question became an immediate problem of the defense of Malaya. Schumann then brought up another question which he said was giving great concern to Pleven. This was possibility of Chinese air attack on the delta. He said that French Air Force has informed Pleven that Chinese Communist planes operating from present bases had capability of remaining over Hanoi for 15 minutes. This would be enough time to cause great destruction and Pleven felt that if such an attack were not opposed immediately by US jets, Communists in 3 to 5 days could cause enough damage to make the delta effectively indefensible. Schumann wondered whether something along following lines might be possible. Provided French decided to strongly reinforce the delta and use conscripts in Indochina, could the President go to Congress and ask for discretionary authority to use US air power to defend the delta if it should be attacked by Chinese Communist planes. A request to Congress coming after the event would necessarily cause a few days delay which, in Pleven's view, would be fatal. Schumann thought present United Action Program might not be ready in time as he did not know what if any progress US was making with other powers in order to satisfy point 2*b* of conditions posed in Deptel 4023.[4]

I told Schumann naturally I could venture no opinion as to whether the President would be able to make such a limited request for discretionary authority but that from my personal knowledge of Washington thinking I felt that it would be absolutely necessary in any event that French take action along lines of paragraph 3 of Deptel 4272 regarding clarification of independence of Associated States.

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[3] British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

[4] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

As I left Schumann again emphasized his hope that a prompt reply would be forthcoming from Washington regarding possibility of holding Franco-US military talks in Washington next week.[5]

DILLON

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[5] In telegram 4325 to Paris, May 29, Dillon was instructed to inform Schumann that it would be most useful for General Ely to come to the United States at the time of the Five-Power talks to undertake secret U.S.-French military negotiations. (751G.00/5–2854) Dillon reported in telegram 4606 from Paris, May 30, that Schumann had stated that Ely would definitely go to Washington. (751G.00/5–3054)

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 327

Memorandum of Conversations, by the United States Representative at the United Nations (Lodge)[1]

SECRET [NEW YORK,] May 28, 1954.

Subject: Indochina—Thailand's Appeal to the Security Council[2]

Participants: Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., and others, as stated below.

At Sir Pierson Dixon's[3] request I met him and M. Henri Hoppenot[4] with respective staffs in Dixon's office. Hoppenot read his instructions to the effect that while he is to cooperate with the United Kingdom and the United States in developing agreement on procedures, immediate submission of the Thai appeal would be "premature" and he is to delay agreement to submission pending decision by his government based on developments at Geneva. Hoppenot thus made it clear he is authorized to discuss only procedure but is unable to give any commitment on the timing of submission.

Dixon said his instructions, dated May 26, are to obtain agreement on answers to questions raised by Eden (Dulte 112)[5] with the understanding final decision on the timing of the Thai appeal to be determined by Eden on receipt of a report on tripartite consultations and in light of the effect on the over-all Indochina problem. He said he asked Khoman[6] to wait with submission of the letter at least over the weekend.

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[1] Drafted by Eric Stein of UNP, and by D. Chadwick Braggiotti, Charles D. Cook, and John C. Ross of USUN.

[2] Regarding the Thai appeal, May 29, see editorial note, p. 1635.

[3] Permanent British Representative at the United Nations.

[4] Permanent French Representative at the United Nations.

[5] Dated May 25; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 928.

[6] Thanat Khoman, Deputy Permanent Thai Representative at the United Nations.

I repeated that according to General Smith both Bidault and Eden agreed on initiation of the Security Council proceeding now. I said that in view of current developments there is greatest urgency at least to bring the appeal before the Security Council; once the matter is there we might consider the pace of the proceedings. I said the Secretary wishes that the Thai letter to the Security Council President be submitted tomorrow and that I could not undertake more than to report to him the French and British view.

At my suggestion the meeting then considered the text of the Thai letter substantially along the lines of the Department's Tosec 228.[7] Dixon and Hoppenot strongly urged that the Thai letter should be focused solely on the threat to Thailand and at their urging I agreed to suggest to Khoman to modify the text as given in USUN's telegram 781, May 28, to the Department.[7] (You will note the new text omits any reference to observation outside of Thailand.) Dixon, supported by Hoppenot, argued in strongest terms that authorization to the POC to observe beyond Thailand would make it much more difficult to obtain the necessary majority in the Assembly which, in their view, might be difficult to obtain in any event. We pointed out that in our estimate it should not be difficult to obtain the necessary majority either in the Security Council or in the General Assembly. Dixon said that particularly the Asians might be worried about observation beyond Thailand and reported Dayal[8] expressed to him doubts as to the wisdom of any initiative in New York when progress is being made in Geneva. He said that it is important to carry the Indians with us and Eden is in touch with them. Hoppenot again stressed the need for delay, in particular since in his view progress is being made in Geneva. I doubted the possibility of progress at the conference table when the Communists were having such success on the battlefield.

There followed some discussion of the British memorandum entitled "Assessment of Implications of an Appeal by Thailand to the UN",[7] pouched to the Department.

It was agreed the tripartite staff would go over this memorandum with a view to determining further procedures in the Security Council and the General Assembly. The consensus of opinion was that a special emergency session under the Uniting for Peace Resolution could not be held since the Thai move is under Chapter VI and not under Chapter VII. As between reconvening the 8th Session and requesting a special session I suggested the matter should be explored with Madame Pandit[9] and others and it was agreed there was no immediate need to determine General Assembly procedure.

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[7] Not printed.

[8] Rajeshwar Dayal of the Indian Delegation at the United Nations.

[9] President of the General Assembly.

Following the meeting with Dixon and Hoppenot I telephoned Mr. Robert Murphy who was in charge of the State Department in the absence of Mr. Dulles. I read to him the changes in the draft letter from the Thai Representative to the President of the Council that I had agreed to tentatively with the British and the French. I told him that following our meeting Dixon took me aside privately and said that if we would not insist that the letter should go in on Saturday[10] he would send it to Eden and recommend UK concurrence in filing it Monday. Mr. Murphy agreed that these changes did not damage our position. He emphasized that the most important consideration in Secretary Dulles' mind was to initiate UN action at the earliest possible moment by filing the Thai letter. He agreed with me that this should be done on Saturday rather than waiting until Monday or Tuesday, despite British and French desire for delay, since we had no assurance whatever of British and French concurrence if we waited until Monday or Tuesday. The main thing was to take the first step. Then as a concession to the British and French views on timing we could indicate that we would not press for immediate Security Council consideration. For example, it perhaps might not be necessary for the Council to meet for a week.

It was agreed that I would suggest to Mr. Khoman that he go ahead and file his letter Saturday morning and that I would inform Hoppenot and Dixon in the sense agreed upon with Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Khoman came in to see me shortly thereafter at his request. I gave him the changes in his draft letter suggested by the British and the French and told him I thought they might be accepted. I suggested that it would be most desirable for him to file his letter Saturday morning. It was clear that Mr. Eden and Mr. Bidault favored this action, although the British and French were somewhat concerned about timing and some details of procedure. The details as to procedure could be worked out after the initial step had been taken. On the question of timing it would not be essential to hold a Security Council meeting immediately, certainly not on Tuesday. We could all work out in consultation together when a Security Council meeting should be held. It was up to the Thai Government to decide when they wanted the meeting. Either I or Ambassador Wadsworth[11] would be in the chair and we would give them a meeting any time they wanted one.

Mr. Khoman agreed with all this. He said he was planning to talk with Prince Wan[12] at eight o'clock Saturday morning but he would try to reach him by phone this evening in order to get the final go-ahead.

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[10] May 29.

[11] James J. Wadsworth, Deputy U.S. Representative at the United Nations.

[12] Prince Wan Waithayakon, Thai Foreign Minister and Permanent Representative of Thailand at the United Nations.

I telephoned Mr. Hoppenot and told him the State Department had agreed to the changes suggested in the draft letter. Secretary Dulles felt very strongly that action in the United Nations should be initiated by filing the letter at the earliest possible moment; on the other hand, in order to meet the French and British view on the question of timing it would not seem essential for the Security Council to meet right away. This, in effect, was the substance of a suggestion Mr. Hoppenot himself had made two days before. Mr. Hoppenot reacted very favorably, indicating he thought this solution was a personal victory for himself.

I telephoned Sir Pierson Dixon and informed him of our views. He was a little chagrined but seemed to accept our decision in good spirit.

Following the above conversations I called on UN Secretary General Hammarskjold at 6:00 p. m. to keep an appointment made at his request. He made the following points in what I consider to be a highly inappropriate and negative manner:

1. He was extremely irked at his lack of information as to what is transpiring at the Geneva Conference.
2. An approach to him by Prince Wan in Geneva caught him unprepared and was made only because of apparent initiative taken by Eden in an attempt to get them together. The first approach by Wan was last Tuesday, and Wan was full of urgency. The second meeting took place on Wednesday and Wan had calmed down somewhat.
3. To hold double discussions on Indochina here and in Geneva would be harmful in extreme.
4. He seriously questioned the propriety of timing this move.
5. He had strong doubts that such a move would obtain a favorable majority. His information was that there would be more members against than for such a proposition. Arab-Asians and dissident Latin Americans were what he had in mind. Western Europeans were also doubtful.
6. As a minor point he also stated he and the Secretariat were unprepared for a special session of the General Assembly, especially since many of his staff were or would be away. He mentioned particularly Protitch who is in London with the Disarmament Subcommittee.

The substance of my remarks to him in rebuttal follows:

1. I was uninformed until Thursday of this week when Khoman called on me as to the precise nature of Wan's intentions in this regard. Since the Secretary General had the benefit of talking with Wan in Geneva earlier this week, he was obviously ahead of me. I stressed to him that this was Thai initiative and that I had only seen Khoman for the first time on this matter Thursday evening. Therefore I could not see how the United States could be blamed for not keeping him informed.
2. With regard to the Secretary General's understanding of what was encompassed by the proposed action and his reasons for feeling

it was improper at this time, I told him we intended to support a Thai request for observers to be sent to Thailand. This seemed to us to be a modest request which should appeal to all reasonable men of good will. Therefore I doubted his pessimistic estimate of the support such a moderate request would receive. He appeared impressed.

3. With regard to the timing of such appeal, I told the Secretary General we are not inflexible nor rigid in our thinking as to the convening of the Security Council. It is a perfectly normal thing for the Thais to request the Security Council to provide observation. I drew a careful distinction between the simple filing of a letter making this request and calling Council meetings to discuss the matter.

4. As for his point that double discussion would jeopardize Geneva deliberations, I pointed out that any sensible person could see that as long as the Communists were having military successes in Vietnam they were not interested in any genuine negotiations. I was therefore not sanguine of any accomplishment coming out of the present discussion in Geneva. I thought on the contrary that UN activation with respect to Indochina, like "thunder in the distance", could have a salutary effect on Geneva proceedings.

5. I told Hammarskjold that I believed Eden and Bidault fully comprehended the scope of the problem, but domestic political difficulties forced them to go slowly and to negotiate to the hilt in Geneva. France and the United Kingdom, like the United States, had its demagogues who sought to and did embarrass their governments' positions.

6. After considerable banter, the Secretary General said it was one thing to put a loaded gun on the table and another to pull it out and fire it. He felt the latter was better. (*Comment:* I am surprised that a Swedish national could make such a bellicose remark.) I expressed disagreement with this simile, saying it was more a question of providing a burglar alarm system, which might be optimum the UN could do. This I strongly favored. Hammarskjold seemed impressed by this comment.

751H.00/5–2854 : Telegram

The Chargé in Cambodia (Montllor) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PHNOM PENH, May 28, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received May 29—9:16 a. m.]

144. Sent Saigon 277, repeated information Department 144, Paris 118. Prime Minister Penn Nouth told me last night that his government is unalterably opposed demarcation any rebel zones in Cambodia because areas occupied by Viet Minh are only non-inhabited forests and mountains. Royal Government wants Viet Minh to leave confines of Cambodia and is willing guarantee safe passage through its territory toward any Viet Minh zones in Vietnam.

MONTLLOR

751G.00/5–2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, May 29, 1954—noon.

4596. Repeated information priority Geneva 314. Limit distribution. I went over status of Franco–US negotiations with Laniel this morning after Trapnell and Gibson [1] had left us. Laniel had not yet been informed of my conversation of yesterday with Schumann regarding Department's telegram 4286 [2] but said he was seeing Schumann later in the day. He expressed great satisfaction at the fact that, as he put it, we had now reached accord in principle on political side.

He also told me that he agreed that the Franco–Vietnamese treaties should be signed promptly. He then said that our political agreement made it urgent that we start military conversations immediately to complete the negotiations regarding training, command structure, and war plans. He said he hoped that US would be prepared to talk on this subject with Ely in Washington next week.

I made it clear to him that we had now answered all questions posed by French Government but that, except for important military phase of negotiations, we were awaiting further action from the French side. I expect to see him again on Monday [3] with Trapnell after Trapnell has obtained detailed up-to-date military information from Ely. Recommend strongly that we agree to French proposal that Franco–US military negotiations be held in Washington next week.

DILLON

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[1] William M. Gibson, First Secretary, U.S. Embassy in France.
[2] See footnote 1, p. 1628.
[3] May 31.

Editorial Note

On May 29, 1954, the Government of Thailand submitted a letter to the Security Council drawing attention to the fighting in Indochina, which, it was contended, constituted a threat to the security of Thailand. The letter requested that the Council authorize the dispatch of observers to Thailand under the Peace Observation Commission. The letter was circulated as document S/3220.

The Council considered this question at its 672d, 673d, and 674th meetings, June 3, 16, and 18, respectively. On June 18, at the instance of the United States, the Security Council voted on a Thai draft resolution (document S/3229) under which the Council would ask the POC to dispatch observers to Thailand and to report as necessary. The resolution received nine votes in favor and one abstention (Lebanon), but failed due to the negative vote of the Soviet Union, a permanent member of the Council. The Soviet Representative had contended during the debate that the Thai request was in fact an attempt by the United States to deepen the conflict in Indochina and to prepare the way for armed intervention by the United Nations. For the record of Security Council consideration of this subject, see United Nations, *Official Records of the Security Council, Ninth Year*, 672d, 673d, and 674th Meetings.

On July 7, the Foreign Minister of Thailand addressed a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations asking that the General Assembly consider the Thai requirement for POC observers (document A/2665). However, the Foreign Minister withdrew this request by letter of August 20, 1954 (document A/2708). The matter therefore did not come before the Assembly.

The question of the Thai appeal to the United Nations was the subject of detailed, protracted, and often high-level discussions at New York, Washington, and Geneva during the spring and summer of 1954, involving in particular the United States, Thailand, France, and the United Kingdom. For additional documentation on this matter, see volume XVI, pages 875 ff. Voluminous unpublished material exists in the following Department of State files: 320.2 AB; 330; 396.1 GE; 751G.00; and in the IO files—master files of the Reference and Documents Section of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. See also *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9.

751G.00/5–3054: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, May 30, 1954—1 a. m.

4605. Repeated information Saigon 560, Geneva 318. Department pass DEPTAR for Ridgway from Trapnell. Limit distribution—eyes only Chiefs of Mission. Reference Embassy telegrams 4566,[1] 4598[2] and 4596.[3] Trapnell, accompanied by Embassy officer, had second interview with Ely, accompanied by Colonel Brohon, this afternoon. Ely opened conversation by confirming fact that Prime Minister had instructed him to give us full information concerning reinforcement program, planning for defense of the delta and related matters.

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[1] Dated May 27, p. 1621.

[2] Telegram 4598 from Paris, May 29, read as follows: "Department of Army for Ridgway. Limit distribution. From Trapnell. Ambassador and Trapnell called on Prime Minister this morning. When he was informed that first Ely–Trapnell conversation has been limited in scope because of Ely's lack of authority to speak with complete frankness, Laniel stated he would give Ely instructions today to give Trapnell details of reinforcement plan and other matters of joint interest in subsequent conversations. Accordingly, Trapnell now plans resume conversations with Ely later in the day." (751G.00/5–2954)

[3] Dated May 29, p. 1635.

(1) He stated that press reports concerning reinforcement program were substantially correct. The mobile group which Foreign Office had asked us to airlift to Indochina about June 15 (Embtel 4604)[4] would consist approximately 3500 men. Reinforcements already despatched include two airborne battalions. Question of activating two air squadrons under consideration including whether B-29's or B-26's more suitable for requirements. Plans afoot for improving infrastructure. Eventually it is planned to send three divisions replacements and reinforcements.

(2) We informed Ely that information regarding reinforcements obtained from Prime Ministers and Jacquet's officers was confused. We would like to have complete up-to-date picture. Ely agreed and instructed Brohon to make up paper breaking down reinforcement plan into three subdivisions—(*a*) already despatched, (*b*) in prospect for near future, and (*c*) under study. Portion of new troops will be used for duty in Cochin China in order release more seasoned troops there for duty in north.

(3) Ely described Cabinet decision of yesterday to call up last half 1954 conscript class six months in advance and to request Assembly for approval send conscripts to Indochina as major "wartime" decision. Manner and timing of government's presentation to Assembly of request to change existing law preventing despatch of conscripts to combat areas overseas not yet decided. Government will either ask for blanket authority from Assembly or he will take each separate request to Parliament as required. Former obviously preferable but latter may have to be resorted to. Ely took great personal satisfaction from yesterday's Cabinet decision for he had been pressing government to take such step for some time. Assembly action would have to be taken in very near future because troops now being readied for despatch to Indochina included conscripts. When we remarked on difficulty which would undoubtedly be encountered in Assembly, particularly in light next week's Indochina debate, Ely replied everyone fully aware of this but government could not do otherwise.

(4) Trapnell asked for more precise definition of "Hanoi–Haiphong axis" included in delta defense plan. He asked Ely's intentions regarding defense of Tourane area. Ely stated that Indochina defense plan was divided into three major divisions, in order of priority: (1) Red River delta including Hanoi–Haiphong axis; (2) Tourane–Hue area and (3) Cochin China. All plans purely defensive. No offensives would be mounted in Indochina for foreseeable future.

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[4] Telegram 4604 from Paris, May 30, reporting the French request for airlift assistance, is not printed. (751G.00/5–3054)

(5) Detailed discussion delta defense ensued in course of which Trapnell was shown French operations map. It provides for defense of a new perimeter to run as follows: West along northern perimeter to Tienchu—southwest to Camla (on the Red River)—south along the Day River to Nga-My—east to Tuongtin (Red River)—Red River to Bamboo Canal—Bamboo Canal to Quicao Song Thai Binh to the sea.

(6) Ely explained that French forces would be withdrawn inside new perimeter where they would be organized into mobile forces to meet attack wherever it occurred. Their number would be increased by other French units brought into the delta from outlying areas including Laos. They would constitute total force of between nine and twelve mobile groups. Area between the new perimeter and former perimeter would be defended by Vietnamese Army. Trapnell observed that this would fall to Viet Minh in short order, an opinion which Ely made no effort to contradict. Ely has already given orders to Navarre for withdrawal into new perimeter and plan is already in operation.

(7) Trapnell asked whether with this force French had not good prospect for holding out until autumn during rainy season. Ely replied the balance between success and failure very narrow (juste). In reply Trapnell's question whether expecting Viet Minh attack on new perimeter before the autumn he replied "yes".

(8) Ely then proceeded give broad review of present status of the Ambassador's conversations with Laniel on possible US intervention. Wished have facts clearly in mind in order give General Valluy instructions he would need before proceeding Washington French representative forthcoming five-power talks. Ely anxious that proposed bilateral Franco-US military conversations take place as soon as possible. He would head French delegation. If they were to coincide with the five-power conversations he would be available for consultation on five-power questions but would not take part in conversations. French five-power delegation to be headed by Valluy who plans fly to Washington May 31. Ely hoped Valluy would be able do as much spadework on bilateral conversations as possible so that when Ely arrived in Washington he could get down to important points immediately. It was his understanding that now that agreement had been reached on the broad political basis for US intervention that bilateral military conversations would concern themselves only with details of that intervention and related questions including training Vietnamese forces, et cetera. It was clearly understood that any plans decided on would be put into effect only if Geneva failed.

(9) Ely wished place greatest possible emphasis on one point. Although he has commitment from Admiral Radford that US aircraft would intervene immediately in event Chinese air intervention, he

believed it must be determined that there are no political obstacles to this commitment being carried out. We informed him that this question had already been discussed by Ambassador and Maurice Schumann and French Government's concern had been reported to Washington (Embtel 4580).[5]

In closing Ely informed Trapnell that Valluy would be empowered to answer any further questions in Washington.

Trapnell now planning return Washington May 31.

DILLON

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[5] Dated May 28, p. 1628.

751G.00/5–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, May 30, 1954—3 p. m.

4607. Repeated information priority Geneva 321. Geneva eyes only Under Secretary. Limit distribution. Reference: Department telegram 4325. Second paragraph of reference telegram[1] may indicate extremely serious misunderstanding between US and French. French draw sharp distinction between (1) US intervention in present circumstances with Viet Minh bolstered by Chinese Communist matériel, technicians and possibly scattered troops and (2) US reaction against full-scale air attack mounted from Communist Chinese bases. Regarding point (1) French fully understand that conditions outlined Department telegram 4023[2] apply to any possible US intervention. As regards point (2), however, the French fully count on US military reaction against such an open Chinese Communist attack. The only limitation on such US reaction which French recognize is the time required for Congressional action which they would hope to be a matter of not more than a day or two. In second case, they feel that US statements to the effect that full-scale Chinese Communist intervention could not be permitted are still binding whether or not there is time to create collective action. The Secretary's radio speech of May 7,[3] indicating that while Chinese had given very considerable support at Dien Bien Phu they had avoided full-scale intervention, was taken to mean by French that if there had been full-scale Chinese intervention US would have responded differently to their request for military assistance.

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[1] The paragraph under reference read as follows: "Schumann's suggestion re discretionary authority to use US airpower would be disturbing if it indicated French are again thinking in terms of US committing itself to intervene alone. However we assume French understand fully preconditions to participation on our part, basic to which is that our participation would be part of a broader collective effort." Regarding telegram 4325, see also footnote 5, p. 1630.

[2] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

[3] See footnote 5, p. 1496.

Schumann reverted last night to this question of protection against a possible air attack and gave me more accurate information than that contained in Embassy telegram 4580[4] regarding French apprehensions. He said that what French General Staff fear is an attack from bases on Hainan Island against Haiphong. Best French estimate is that Chinese jets coming from Hainan could remain over Haiphong for 20 minutes on each mission. A massive Chinese air attack (Schumann mentioned figure of 100 planes) could completely knock out French air capabilities in the delta and could so seriously damage the port of Haiphong that it would be impossible to conduct a successful withdrawal of French forces through the port. The loss of French air potential would drastically tip the scales in favor of the Viet Minh and make total defeat of French forces in the delta inevitable. It is against this eventuality that the French wish to have protection. Paragraph 9 of Embassy telegram 4605[5] indicates Ely's belief that he already has commitment from Admiral Radford on this type of attack. What French feel they are asking for now is not, in fact, a new commitment from US but assurances that US reaction will come within a matter of hours and even, if possible, in time to meet attacking Chinese planes. Schumann said he felt that only circumstances in which Chinese would make such an attack would be if they felt that US, for one reason or another, was not in a position to respond promptly and effectively. Therefore, Schumann suggested that if it should be impracticable to obtain preliminary approval of such military action from US Congress, it might be equally useful to have a clear warning from either the Secretary or the President that a massive Chinese air attack would meet with US opposition. Schumann said he felt certain that if Chinese realized that an air attack would cause US intervention they would never take the risk of mounting such an attack.

I have previously stated to Department that if we allowed delta to fall to the Viet Minh without a successful evacuation of the French Expeditionary Corps, the effect here would be disastrous. If such a disaster should come about because of open Chinese Communist air attack to which we had not responded by US military action, the result here would be nothing short of catastrophic. We would have to count on a strong movement in France that could well be successful in favor of making peace at any price with the Soviets rather than continuing to count on US support through NATO. The effect of such action by France on the North Atlantic Alliance is obvious. In addition, I do not feel that we could exclude possibility, if the Soviets play their cards right, of a popular front government arising to carry out such a new policy. This naturally would incur the danger of an eventual Communist take-over in France. I do not have any means of evaluating effect in Asia of a unilateral US response to a Chinese attack, but Department should be constantly aware that lack of US response to a full-scale Chinese Communist air attack on the delta would place in jeopardy the North Atlantic Alliance and our whole position in Western Europe.

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[4] Dated May 28, p. 1628.

[5] *Supra.*

Schumann has never asked me whether US response to a Chinese attack would be subject to same conditions posed in Department telegram 4023 and I have never, in any way, indicated to him what the US requirements would be for reaction in such an emergency except to point out that full clarification of the independence of Vietnam would be most important. See Embassy telegram 4580.[6]

DILLON

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[6] Telegram 4332 to Paris (sent to Geneva as Tedul 142), May 31, stated the following: "Reference your 4607 . . . answer which should be made plainly to Schumann on matter possible Chinese Communist air intervention is clearly set forth in paragraph 3 of Department's 4094, May 15. This remains U.S. position and you should not permit Schumann or anybody else in French Government to be under any misapprehension concerning it.

"Question will be brought to Secretary's personal attention immediately on his return Tuesday." (751G.00/5–3054)

In a memorandum of Monday, May 31, Deputy Under Secretary Murphy summarized the problem for the Secretary and recommended that the matter be discussed by the National Security Council. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 310)

Ambassador Dillon reported in telegram 4625 from Paris, June 1, that he had advised Schumann in accordance with Department's telegram 4332. The telegram indicated, however, that the Ambassador retained reservations regarding the clarity of the United States position and its acceptability to the French. For text of telegram 4625, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pp. 508–509.

751G.00/5–3154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, May 31, 1954—1 p. m.

4612. Repeated information Geneva 327. Limited distribution. When Trapnell and I arrived at Laniel's house for meeting this morning, we found Maurice Schumann and Ely also present. The meeting was short and it was confirmed that Ely would go to Washington for bilateral military talks. His mission will ostensibly be to attend Five-Power Military Talks, and it is fully understood that bilateral negotiations will remain secret. Ely is unable to arrive Washington this week and Valluy has been authorized to represent him both at Five-Power Talks and at commencement of bilateral negotiations which Ely stated he understood were to cover training of local troops, command structure and war plans. Valluy will also arrange date for Ely's arrival with JCS. Ely said he was going London tomorrow for one day visit with Harding whom he does not know well, for purpose of making friendly contact prior to opening of Five-Power Talks.[1]

Laniel once more mentioned French fear of Chinese Communist air attack. He made it clear that French regard present bilateral negotiations as a prelude to U.S. intervention should Geneva fail or should Communists drag negotiations at Geneva while attempting to obtain a military decision in the delta. On the other hand, Laniel clearly considers that an all-out air attack on the delta by the Chinese, while not likely, is a possibility and should be planned for. He feels that such an attack would completely change the present situation and wants the best assurances possible of prompt U.S. help in the event of such a Chinese attack. Ely confirmed that his understanding with Radford on this subject was purely a technical one between Chiefs of Staff and was subject to political decision by U.S. He said that Radford had plans ready so that U.S. assistance could come very rapidly once the political decision had been made. I informed Laniel that after my meeting with Schumann Saturday night[2] at which Schumann had raised the subject, I had sent an inquiry on Sunday to Washington explaining in full French view that (1) U.S. intervention because of continuation and aggravation of present military situation in Indochina, and (2) U.S. reaction to an all-out Chinese air attack were two very separate problems, and that some arrangement should be made to handle a Chinese air attack if it should occur prior to creation of a SEATO alliance.

If we should inform the French that we will not react to a Chinese air attack except after making the necessary arrangements for collective action, I am afraid that this would have a profound and immediate effect both on French attitude in Geneva and on present French plans for bolstering the defense of Indochina. We gave Laniel General Trapnell's opinion that Ely's overall plan seemed good and that French should be able to hold areas which Ely plans to defend. Ely then arranged for further technical discussion with Trapnell later in morning. See following telegram.[3]

DILLON

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[1] Military representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and New Zealand met in Washington June 3–11 to consider the military situation in Southeast Asia. For the report of the conference, see volume XII.

[2] Regarding the conversation of Saturday night, May 29, see telegram 4607, May 30, *supra*.

[3] *Infra*.

751G.00/5-3154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, May 31, 1954—2 p. m.

4613. Repeated information Geneva 328, Saigon 562. Limit distribution. Department pass Defense for DEPTAR for Ridgway. This is joint Trapnell–Embassy message. Reference Embtels 4566 [1] and 4605,[2] repeated Geneva and Saigon. After interview with Laniel, Schumann and Ely (immediately preceding telegram),[3] Trapnell accompanied by Embassy officer proceeded, at Ely's request, to his office for further clarification of points covered earlier with Prime Minister.

1. Ely stated he had just received telegram from Navarre reporting he had again discussed question of US training of Vietnamese forces with O'Daniel. Latter had reported that Secretary Wilson had given his approval to O'Daniel's concept of job. Ely wished to point out that there was a misunderstanding concerning his position in the matter. He thought that Radford believed him to be opposed to the principle of forming native troops in divisional units. Ely now favored such a plan. In his opinion, there were two considerations in the matter. First was the form of the division to be mounted. In his view it should not conform to the American form. He would not attempt to propose another form at this time but intended to study the matter in Washington with the US authorities. He wished, however, that a definite form be fixed and adhered to. Second consideration was a political one. He agreed that if only for political reasons the formation of Vietnamese divisions was desirable. It would give any Vietnamese a sense of responsibility under their independent status and should improve the morale and efficiency of the national army. He also agreed with the principle that US advisors and instructors should be placed at various levels within the division in a manner similar to that used in Korea.

2. Ely stated that there was need for clarification of question of US participation in planning operations. Although the principle of training of native forces was agreed to; there could not be any question at the moment of US sharing the responsibility of operational planning. There can be only one commander at the present time, and that must remain a French responsibility. On the other hand, provided an agreement is reached on US intervention and irrespective to the details of that agreement, it is agreed that US officers will be integrated into French planning staffs. Ely will also be prepared discuss details in Washington.

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[1] Dated May 27, p. 1621.

[2] Dated May 30, p. 1636.

[3] *Supra.*

3. During this phase conversations Ely re-emphasized point that question US intervention will arise only if Geneva fails and question US participation in joint planning, training of native forces, et cetera, will arise only if agreement on intervention is reached.

4. We asked Ely to reiterate his concept of rough agenda for forthcoming Franco-US military conversation in Washington. He replied that talks would fit into three main headings. First, it being understood that the US would intervene in Indochina only under certain conditions and in accordance with a joint plan established in advance, task at Washington was to determine what that joint plan is to be. Parallel with determination this plan is question of what US will do if there is Chinese air intervention before plan is set. Although Ely has "commitment on this matter from Admiral Radford," he must ascertain that there are no political obstructions to delay carrying out such commitment and if there are that they be removed. (Embtel 4607, repeated Geneva 321).[4] Second heading is training of Vietnamese Army, details of which he is sure can be worked out easily and promptly. Third is form of command structure under which the Franco-US plan is to operate.

Ely again confirmed that Valluy would leave for Washington tonight as is Trapnell (Deptel 4326).[5] Ely, himself, would follow some time next week dependent upon when Valluy informed him US was ready to proceed.

DILLON

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[4] Dated May 30, p. 1639.

[5] Telegram 4326 to Paris, May 29, regarding the schedule of General Trapnell, is not printed. (751G.00/5–2954)

751G.00/5–3154 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, May 31, 1954—6 p. m.

2603. Repeated information Geneva 176, Paris 924, London 71, Hanoi unnumbered. Yesterday Second Secretary Goodman and I visited De Lanessan Hospital in Hanoi which is main base hospital for all Tonkin area. We visited every wounded man in hospital with exception of those who could not receive visitors, and gave them cigarettes. We were able to talk with a number of wounded from Dien Bien Phu including a medical lieutenant and a non-commissioned officer who gave us intelligent replies to questions re Viet Minh psychological warfare techniques, at least as displayed at Dien Bien Phu.

Both officers and men, including French parachutists and German and Austrian legionnaires, concurred that there had been a continuous loudspeaker campaign in closing days of battle, garrison being exhorted in Arabic, German, Hungarian and French to believe that Viet Minh did not wish to continue useless fighting, that garrison should surrender, and that it would be well treated following capitulation.

As for report that Viet Minh had cadres of European and Japanese officers, evacuees agreed that there had probably been some Moroccan, German, possibly Czechoslovakian, and certainly Japanese officers in Viet Minh ranks, but they would not give assurances that these officers came in from outside. In fact Cogny and others were inclined to believe that with exception of Japanese, these men were renegade deserters from Foreign Legion who had gone over to Viet Minh.

Following fall of Dien Bien Phu French wounded were treated with better care than Viet Minh wounded. Viet Minh medical teams did utmost to alleviate plight of French wounded, gave the men cigarettes and candy, and stressed theme that there was no rancour against French garrison but merely an overwhelming national desire that French and foreign troops be withdrawn from Vietnam. Theme was "we want peace even more than you do but we will fight until you leave our country".

Governor Tri separately informed us that when French Dr. Huard, chief negotiator for evacuation of wounded, spent several nights at Dien Bien Phu, he encountered similar attitude on part of Viet Minh officers with whom he dealt. Tri seemed inclined to attach importance to asserted desire of Viet Minh for speedy cease-fire and armistice, but in his mood which is now verging toward despair I think he is grasping at straws.

At Dien Bien Phu there was immediate resort to propaganda techniques such as motion pictures of Berlin conference and May Day parade in Moscow, private conversations by French-speaking Viet Minh, and distribution of propaganda pamphlets. However, there was no attempt to proselytize among officer prisoners. Main technique was use of uniform attitudes of compassion and courtesy to establish in mind of wounded that Viet Minh are a civilized and honorable foe. Possibly had wounded remained longer in Viet Minh hands more typical brain washing techniques would have been tried, but within limit of 8 days Communist command undoubtedly thought more subtle approach was justified.

At least among evacuees from Dien Bien Phu with whom we spoke these techniques appeared to have made little impression.

Although some 48 Vietnamese wounded had been evacuated from Dien Bien Phu, largely because they were so seriously wounded (including two basket cases) also prevent their being removed by Viet Minh, main theme taken by Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu re Vietnamese wounded (and other Vietnamese troops) there was that they were brothers who now at last had been liberated from servitude in a foreign army, and thus, of course, could not be given up.

Colonel commanding hospital told us that in his estimate all of French severely wounded had been recovered. He thought there must be at least 1000 more walking wounded who had been taken prisoner. He said that there were fully as many Vietnamese wounded as French. This would place French estimate of total wounded at Dien Bien Phu at around 3600 men.

McClintock

751G.00/5–3154 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET Saigon, May 31, 1954—7 p. m.

2604. Repeated information Paris 925, Geneva 177, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. During my conversations this weekend in Hanoi, I found Governor Tri considerably shaken in his estimate of fortitude of Tonkin populace. He said Dien Bien Phu had had a marked effect on morale and that Geneva Conference had even greater repercussions among people of Tonkin. They were fearful that even seemingly fair armistice terms providing for zones of occupation would in effect amount to partition and loss of Tonkin to Viet Minh.

Tri repeatedly exclaimed to me yesterday "if only United States could make a declaration of intent to intervene militarily in case enemy tries to take Delta, it would be worth ten divisions". I replied that declarations were of little use unless they described conditions of fact and I did not know my government's attitude toward military intervention.

. . . .

These vignettes are perhaps too highly drawn, but at least they reflect a mounting sense of panic and a feeling that the last act is about to open.

McClintock

751G.00/5–3154 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET Saigon, May 31, 1954—8 p. m.

2610. Repeated information Paris 926, Geneva 178. General O'Daniel is growing increasingly unhappy at his inability thus far to start moving on training Vietnamese troops on a divisional basis. He feels that French, including General Ely (Paris 4566),[1] are giving him a polite run-around and likewise is becoming aware of fact that there is no mobilization base for a Vietnamese national army at present and no national leadership to inspire conscripts to move toward colors. General O'Daniel has not yet realized that, of course, during a conference to discuss an armistice and cease-fire, it is always difficult to recruit.

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[1] Dated May 27, p. 1621.

General O'Daniel told me this afternoon that he had informed General Hinh this morning that he would not recommend the approval of any military end item aid for the Vietnamese national army, unless agreement was reached on the training of at least five divisions. He says he will so inform Defense Minister Quat this evening. He did not say where the troops would be found.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/6–154

Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 1, 1954.

Because of the strength of the President's reaction to my briefing this morning on the messages exchanged between Dillon and the State Department over the weekend, I thought it advisable to come over and talk with you and give you the attached memorandum.

It seems to me that the position of the State Department and the position of the President are in entire consonance.

Reading the exchange of wires and realizing the local pressures on an Ambassador, I am doubtful whether it is as clear to Dillon as it is to you and the President that some united action is an essential element to U.S. response. Perhaps it would be a good idea to let Admiral Radford have a copy of the attached memorandum and any further explicit message sent by State to Dillon on the subject.[2]

[Annex]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 1, 1954—9:30 a.m.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL CUTLER

I read the following messages which had come in for the President over the last two days: From Paris 4613, 4612, 4605, 4607; to Paris

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[1] Typewritten notations on the source texts indicate that both this memorandum and its annex were dictated, but not read by General Cutler.

[2] A handwritten marginal notation at this point on the source text reads "done."

4325 and 4332.[3] After reading them, I went in to summarize them to the President. He did not read any part of them himself and accordingly some of the refinements of Dillon's positions did not reach him.

I said that the messages divided really into two parts. One part dealt with Ely and Trapnell discussions on French strategy, which I briefly summarized. The other part dealt with French inquiries as to what the U.S. reaction would be to a massive air strike by the Chinese communists, perhaps from Hainan, prior to any regional grouping for the defense of Southeast Asia being arranged following a failure of the Geneva Conference.

The messages showed that at high French levels (Ely, Laniel, Schumann), there was talk as if a commitment had been made by Admiral Radford of immediate U.S. retaliation in the event of Chinese communist overt aggression. The French leaders seem to recognize that any such U.S. action would require political approval, but they wanted to be sure that U.S. assistance in this event would come very rapidly. I said that the last State Department message (Deptel 4332, Paris)[4] made plain that in this contingency there would have to be time for consultations in Washington and that therefore no U.S. counteraction could be immediate.

The President expressed himself very strongly in reaction to my remarks. He said the United States would not intervene in China on any basis except united action. He would not be responsible for going into China alone unless a joint Congressional resolution ordered him to do so. The United States should in no event undertake alone to support French colonialism. Unilateral action by the United States in cases of this kind would destroy us. If we intervened alone in this case we would be expected to intervene alone in other parts of the world. He made very plain that the need for united action as a condition of U.S. intervention was not related merely to the regional grouping for the defense of Southeast Asia, but was also a necessity for U.S. intervention in response to Chinese communist overt aggression.

I called attention to the provisions of our Southeast Asian policy

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[3] For telegrams 4613, 4612 (both dated May 31), 4605, and 4607 (both dated May 30), see pp. 1643, 1641, 1636, and 1639, respectively. Regarding telegram 4325, see footnote 5, p. 1630. Regarding telegram 4332, see footnote 6, p. 1641.

[4] Deptel 4332, Paris, referred to paragraph 3 of Deptel 4094, May 15, as stating U.S. position in event of possible Chinese communist air intervention and that Dillon should not permit Schumann or anybody else in the French Government to be under any misapprehension concerning it. Said paragraph 3 reads as follows: "If collective defense arranged as contemplated, this would of course embrace situation resulting from intervention by MIGs. If such intervention should occur prior to conclusion of collective defense arrangements, then the US reaction would have to be judged under circumstances of the moment, but in any case President would expect to make his action dependent upon Congressional authorization, assuming US interests not directly attacked. However, Defense advises that their intelligence does not indicate that Chinese airfield situation is such as to make such intervention seem likely." [Footnote in the source text. For text of telegram 4094 to Paris, May 15, see p. 1569.]

(NSC 5404) [*5405*],[4] which indicated that in the event of Chinese overt communist aggression against Thailand, Burma, or Malaya, the United States would try to get allies to join in retaliation, but that eventually the United States would consider taking action alone. I called attention to Secretary Dulles' speech last fall indicating that overt Chinese action against Southeast Asia would lead to a situation that might not be limited to that area. The President said there was no difference between himself and the Secretary of State at all. However, he expressed the strong view that there should be no failure to make the U.S. position absolutely clear to the French so that there would be no basis of misapprehension on the part of the French.

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[4] For extracts of NSC 5405, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Southeast Asia," Jan. 16, 1954, see p. 971.

S/S–NSC files, lot 63 D 351, NSC 5421

Studies Prepared for the National Security Council[1]

TOP SECRET
NSC 5421

[WASHINGTON,] June 1, 1954.

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
TO THE
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
ON
STUDIES WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE
U.S. ACTION REGARDING INDOCHINA

References: A. NSC 5405[2]
B. NSC Action Nos. 1086–*b* and *c*, 1104–*b*, 1106, 1110 and 1112[3]

The enclosed studies with respect to possible U.S. action regarding Indochina have been prepared by various departments and agencies in

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[1] The source text consists of a binder the cover of which bears the handwritten notation "only cy in Dept." The binder contains a 20-page summary of the studies, dated June 10, followed by the note by Executive Secretary Lay, the table of contents (both printed here), and the texts of the studies. The source text is accompanied by documentation on the development of the Department of State component of the studies, the preparation of which was coordinated by Robert R. Bowie, Director of the Policy Planning Staff and Department of State Representative on the Planning Board of the National Security Council.

For summaries of the studies and comments on them by Defense Department officials, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, pp. 514–529. For a memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, May 26, regarding the studies prepared by the Defense Department, see *ibid.*, pp. 487–493.

The studies comprising NSC 5421 were circulated to the members of the National Security Council on June 1 for information. The Council took no formal action in their regard.

[2] For extracts of NSC 5405, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Southeast Asia," Jan. 16, 1954, see p. 971.

[3] For NSC Action No. 1086, see the memorandum of discussion at the 192d NSC Meeting, Apr. 6, p. 1250; for NSC Action No. 1104, see extracts from the memoran-

Footnote continued on next page.

response to requests authorized by the President. In the event that conditions established by the President as prerequisites for United States intervention in the conflict in Indochina are met, these studies will provide the basis for further consideration by the Council of the question of such intervention.

These studies were prepared on the assumption that United States armed forces intervene in the conflict in Indochina, and on the alternate assumptions that the Chinese Communists: (*a*) intervene with armed forces in Indochina, or (*b*) do not intervene with armed forces in Indochina.

A draft of a Presidential message is being prepared by the Department of State and will be circulated later for insertion in part I of this report.[4] Additions and amendments to the enclosed reports may be circulated from time to time.

Pursuant to Presidential directive, distribution of this report is being limited to one copy to each Council participant, which is being transmitted through the Planning Board members.

It is requested that special security precautions be observed in the handling of the enclosures and that access to them be strictly limited on an absolute need-to-know basis. These reports may NOT be further reproduced in any form without the permission of this office.

James S. Lay, Jr.
Executive Secretary

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The Commandant of the Marine Corps

Footnote continued from preceding page.

dum of discussion at the 194th Meeting of the NSC, Apr. 29, p. 1431; for NSC Action No. 1110, see the memorandum of discussion at the 196th NSC Meeting, May 8, p. 1505. For NSC Actions No. 1106 and 1112, see the memoranda of discussion at the 195th and 196th Meetings of the NSC, May 6 and 8, respectively, in volume XII.

[4] The source text is accompanied by a "Draft Presidential Speech before Congress," dated June 8 and apparently prepared within the Policy Planning Staff. It is not printed.

Studies With Respect to Possible U.S. Action Regarding Indochina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. *By the Department of State*

- Economic Warfare Against Communist China
- United Nations Action in the Event of United States Armed Intervention in Indochina
- Juridical Relations in the French Union: Giving Effect to the Independence of the Associated States of Indochina
- Draft of President's Message (to be circulated)

II. *By the Department of Justice*

- Constitutional and Legal Aspects, Including Appropriate Form for Joint Resolution, of President's Request for Authorization "to Intervene in Indochina"

III. *By the Central Intelligence Agency*

- Communist Capabilities in Indochina [5]
- Communist Reactions to Certain U.S. Courses of Action with Respect to Indochina [6]

IV. *By the Department of Defense*

- Under Alternate Assumptions that Chinese Communists Intervene or Do Not Intervene:
  - Strategic Concept and Plan of Operation
  - Forces Required of Each Nation Participating
  - Plan for Logistic Support
  - Plan for Command Structure
  - Plan for Training Native Troops
  - Plan for World-Wide Military Aid

V. *By the Office of Defense Mobilization*

- Industrial Mobilization
- Manpower Mobilization
- Economic Stabilization Mobilization

VI. *By the Foreign Operations Administration*

- Plan for U.S. Economic and Technical Aid in Event of Intervention

VII. *By the Operations Coordinating Board*

- Plan for Gaining Maximum Support for U.S. Intervention in the Associated States from the Indigenous Peoples

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[5] The document listed here was an advance copy of SNIE 10-4-54 of June 15, which is printed on p. 1702.

[6] The document listed here was an advance copy of NIE 10-3-54 of June 1, which is printed *infra*.

Plan of Political Warfare (Including Guerilla and Paramilitary) Action Against the Vietminh

Plan for Gaining Maximum Support of Other Free World Countries

Plan for Political Warfare Organization as Integral Part of Intervention

Plan for Keeping China out of War or Reducing Its Effectiveness

VIII. *By the Bureau of the Budget*

Preparation of Any Necessary Request for Supplemental Appropriations

Preparation of Any Necessary Requests for Additional Statutory Authority Required for Appropriations

Revision of FY 55, 56 Budget Plans

[Here follow the texts of the studies listed above.]

INR–NIE files

National Intelligence Estimate

TOP SECRET
NIE 10–3–54

WASHINGTON, 1 June 1954.

COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES IN INDOCHINA [1]

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Communist capabilities to oppose an intervention of US armed forces in Indochina employing either:

a. Viet Minh military forces supported indirectly by Communist China; or
b. Chinese Communist and Viet Minh forces.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The US has intervened during 1954 with ground, sea, and air forces in Indochina.

2. US forces are opposed by either: (*a*) Viet Minh forces alone, receiving indirect Chinese Communist aid; or (*b*) Chinese Communist and Viet Minh forces, receiving Soviet support generally along the lines of such support in Korea.

3. This estimate does not consider the effect on enemy capabilities

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, "The Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 25 May 1954. The AEC and FBI abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

"The following member organizations of the Intelligence Advisory Committee participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff."

of US counteraction or of enemy action not directed against Indochina.

THE ESTIMATE

I. *Capabilities of Viet Minh Forces Supported Indirectly by the Chinese Communists*

*Viet Minh Ground Force Capabilities**

1. Viet Minh forces would be capable of maintaining guerrilla warfare throughout Indochina and of mounting attacks or counterattacks by regular forces up to six divisions in strength in northern Indochina. If, on the other hand, the Viet Minh make an initial decision to avoid large-scale positional warfare, they would be capable of greatly expanded guerrilla activity. Such a move would greatly increase the attritional aspects of the war on allied forces.

2. The logistic capability of the Viet Minh would be almost completely dependent upon Chinese Communist willingness and capability to make supplies available. We estimate that the present lines of communication leading from China into the Delta area of Indochina can carry the logistic support for 200,000 to 300,000 combat troops in addition to the present 290,000 combat forces. However, it is unlikely the Viet Minh combat forces would expand beyond an additional 150,000 over present strength.

3. Introduction of "volunteer" Chinese Communist forces as guerrillas or as components of Viet Minh units could increase Viet Minh capabilities up to the limit of logistic support, but it is unlikely that the pretense of nonintervention could be maintained if sizeable numbers of Chinese Communist personnel were committed.

Viet Minh Air Capabilities

4. The Viet Minh do not now possess an air force.

5. In the Viet Minh-held areas there are approximately nine airfields with 4,000 to 5,000 foot runways presently unserviceable but which, within a period of a week to 10 days, could be developed to take MIG–15 operations. There are 20 airfields with runways ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 feet which, with varying degrees of improvement, would be suitable for liaison aircraft and possibly light transport activity. Many of these airfields would be severely restricted in use during wet weather due to flooding. In addition, new airfields suitable for MIG–15 operations might be constructed within 30 days. Availability of airfields would not pose a limitation to the operation of an air force of considerable size within Indochina after a week to 10 days of high priority construction activity. The Viet Minh do not now possess the capability to operate such a force. However, the Chinese Communists

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*See Table I. [Footnote in the source text. Table I is not printed.]

have the capability of training Viet Minh pilots and support personnel and of providing them with aircraft and equipment. We have no firm evidence that this capability is now being exercised.

Viet Minh Naval Capabilities

6. Viet Minh have the following naval capabilities: river mining, river ambush, and sabotage in ports and naval facilities. They also have a considerable number of native junks which could be pressed into service to meet logistic demands or to take advantage of military opportunities.

7. The Chinese Communists are capable of training Viet Minh forces in naval warfare, and providing them with river and coastal mines and mine layers.

Communist Political Warfare Capabilities

8. The Communists would have the capability of opposing US intervention by appeals to nationalism among the Indochinese population and by denouncing US intervention as an operation designed to perpetuate colonialism. These capabilities would vary not only in relation to the military progress of the war but also to the extent that the US action appeared to the Indochinese to guarantee their independence.

9. Even without specific political assurances, immediate and large-scale successes by US arms would almost certainly reduce Communist political capabilities to subvert and intimidate the Indochinese people and to use them for intelligence and logistic purposes. In addition, signs of Viet Minh defeat would probably increasingly encourage defections from the Viet Minh. If US armed successes were accompanied by political measures which guaranteed Indochinese independence, Viet Minh political warfare capabilities would be further reduced. Viet Minh nationalist appeal would be diminished, and there would probably be considerable and increasing defections from the Viet Minh. These developments would also reduce Viet Minh capabilities to conduct guerrilla and terrorist activities.

10. Communist political warfare capabilities in Indochina would remain substantial if US-allied arms did not quickly give evidence that they could bring the war to a victorious close within a short time, and if the Indochinese were not convinced that their independence was assured. We believe, moreover, that even in the event of large-scale US military successes, accompanied by a genuine conviction in Indochina that independence was assured, the hard-core Communists of the Viet Minh, probably supported from China, would for a long time retain substantial capabilities for guerrilla activity and subversion.

II. *Capabilities of Chinese Communist and Viet Minh Forces*

Chinese Ground Force Capabilities in Indochina†

11. If the Chinese Communists decide to commit Korean combat-trained forces, they have available 13 armies‡ which served in Korea and are now in China. Nine of these units are at present stationed in northeast China and four in east China. It is estimated that the most distant of these, in the northeast, could be redeployed to the Indochina border in 17 to 24 days and the nearest could be redeployed in 10 to 14 days. The Chinese Communists are capable of redeploying five of these armies to the border in 30 days after a decision to do so has been made. If the Chinese Communists decide not to commit Korean combat-trained forces, there are two armies in southeast China, elements of which can cross the Indochina border piecemeal in four or five days or which can be committed in a coordinated action in 10 to 12 days. Redeployment of five additional non-Korean trained armies could be accomplished in 14 to 24 days. It is possible, also, that these capabilities might be exercised prior to US intervention.

12. The capacity of lines of communication within China is not the limiting factor upon the number of Chinese Communist troops which could be moved to the Indochina border and supplied within Indochina. The chief limiting factor upon the employment of Chinese Communist forces in Indochina is the capacity of the lines of communication within Indochina. For combat operations, each army would require approximately 111 short tons per day of all classes of supplies while each artillery division would require approximately 42 short tons daily. On this basis, the maximum number of Chinese Communist units which the present capacity of lines of communication in Indochina from the China border to the Delta region would support, in addition to present Communist forces in Indochina, is approximately seven armies and two artillery divisions. Thus, the total number of Communist combat forces which could be supported over present lines of communication in Indochina is approximately 500,000 to 600,000.

13. After redeployment of Chinese Communist forces to the Indochina border, it is estimated that, during the dry season, they could reach the Hanoi–Haiphong area with leading units in seven days after crossing the border, could mount a coordinated attack with about four armies two weeks after initial units cross the border, and could build

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†See Table II. [Footnote in the source text. Table II is not printed.]

‡Chinese Communist armies would probably be about 36,000 in strength, each composed of three infantry divisions, an artillery regiment, and a truck regiment of approximately 400 trucks. Each of these armies would be approximately equivalent to a US division in terms of method of employment and effectiveness. It is probable that two artillery divisions would also be employed, each consisting of a regiment of 36 75mm or 76mm howitzers or division guns, a regiment of 36 105mm, a regiment of 36 122mm, and a battalion of AAA (AW). [Footnote in the source text.]

up to a total force for coordinated action of seven armies and two artillery divisions four weeks after crossing the border. Large-scale operations south of the Red River Delta area would require use of the rail line to the south, and hence are dependent upon Communist capture of Hanoi and operation of the railway from Hanoi southward. If the Communists could utilize this line to support operations, the entire force could be supported logistically to Saigon. If the rail line could not be utilized, the force which could be supported would be reduced to about three or four armies. During the rainy season troop movements will be slowed, logistic support made more difficult, and the scope and magnitude of coordinated tactical operations considerably reduced. If the Chinese Communists enter Indochina during the rainy season, they probably could not support more than four armies and two artillery divisions under large-scale offensive combat conditions, building to the total of seven armies and two artillery divisions at the next dry season. During the dry season, Communist China would be capable of employing light and medium tanks in small armored units in the Tonkin Delta.

Chinese Communist Air Capabilities in Indochina§

14. Operating from bases in China, the Chinese Communists have an estimated capability to intervene immediately with an air force consisting of 70 jet and 40 piston fighters capable of operating against targets in northern Indochina, and a force of 10 medium piston bombers capable of operations against targets anywhere in Indochina. In addition, the Chinese Communist Air Force has about 650 jet fighters and 120 jet light bombers. Current airfield capacity in south China would permit the Chinese Communists to deploy about 250 of these jet fighters and jet light bombers immediately to augment the force operating against Indochina. Although this movement could be completed in 24 to 48 hours, the scale of operation of this force might be restricted initially by a shortage of supplies. Necessary logistic support could be provided if the Chinese Communists undertook to stockpile aviation supplies at the necessary airfields prior to US intervention. If they did not, we believe that supplies in quantities necessary to support sustained operations could be made available within a week to 10 days.

15. Additional augmentation of this force would require repair of existing airfields or construction of new airfields within range of Indochina. However, within a period of 10 to 30 days, the capacity of such airfields could be so increased that the size of this force augmentation would depend largely on air defense requirements elsewhere.

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§See Table III. [Footnote in the source text. Table III is not printed.]

Communist Chinese Naval Capabilities‖

16. The Chinese Communists are believed to have the following naval units in south China, mostly in the Canton area: one frigate, three gunboats, six–eight motor torpedo boats, four motor gunboats or mine sweepers, 14–16 landing ships and craft, and six–eight auxiliaries. In addition, there are numerous river and coastal patrol craft, and an estimated 1,000 motorized junks in the area south of Canton.

17. The Chinese Communists could undertake river and coastal mining, limited minesweeping, and the transport of supplies by sampans and junks. Also, a short-haul amphibious lift, utilizing several thousand junks and sampans now in the South China Sea coastal area, could be provided on relatively short notice.

18. Indications have been received recently of the presence of two or more submarines in the Gulf of Tonkin. Submarine patrols would present a considerable threat to naval forces operating in this area. It is possible that the USSR would provide the Chinese Communists with a limited number of submarines to be operated by Soviet crews or under the guidance of Soviet advisers.

19. While the Chinese naval air force is still in its formative phase, it has a limited capability of supporting surface combat operations by mine laying and by attacks on merchant shipping and naval vessels.

Communist Political Warfare Capabilities

20. Communist political warfare capabilities in the case of Chinese intervention would vary in relation to the course of the war. If the Communists suffered defeats, there would be numerous Viet Minh defections and a consequent weakening of the Viet Minh regime, particularly if the Indochinese were convinced that foreign rule was at an end. Moreover, the appearance in Indochina of large numbers of Chinese would probably revive the traditional Indochinese enmity for the Chinese. Communist successes, or a prolonged struggle in which neither side appeared to have prospects of victory, would enhance Communist political warfare capabilities. However, even if the Communist forces in Indochina were crushed completely, the Communists would continue to have a potential for infiltration and guerrilla warfare, particularly so long as a strong Communist regime existed in China.

‖See Table IV. [Footnote in the source text. Table IV is not printed.]

Editorial Note

At 11:45 a.m., June 2, 1954, President Eisenhower met at the White House with the following individuals: John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State; Robert B. Anderson, the Deputy Secretary of Defense;

Admiral Arthur W. Radford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Douglas MacArthur II, Counselor of the Department of State; and Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The subject under consideration was the appropriate response by the United States to unprovoked aggression by Communist China in Southeast Asia should it occur.

Cutler transmitted his notes of the meeting to Secretary Dulles on the same day. His memorandum of transmittal contained the following summary of the sense of the meeting:

> "*a.* In the event of overt, unprovoked Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia which would be a direct threat to the security of the United States and to other nations having security interests in the region, Congress would be asked immediately to declare that a state of war existed with Communist China, and the U.S. should then launch large-scale air and naval attacks on ports, airfields, and other military targets in mainland China, using as militarily appropriate 'new weapons,' in the expectation that some of such other nations would join in opposing such aggression.
>
> "*b.* The U.S. should seek firm agreement in advance from other nations having security interests in the region (such as some, or all, of the Philippine Islands, Thailand, France, the Associated States, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) to join with the U.S. in counteracting this threat to the security of the free world."

For Cutler's memorandum and his notes on the White House session, see volume XII.

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Memoranda of Conversation"

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 2, 1954.

CONVERSATION WITH DAG HAMMARSKJOLD, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

After an exchange of courtesies, etc., Mr. Hammarskjold mentioned the pending Thai application.[2] He said he was afraid the result of this might be to reduce the chance of success at Geneva. He said that while the Thai application did not necessarily involve any agreement about the Indochina matter being discussed at the UN, the Russians probably would feel called upon to cover the entire territory, and that this might precipitate a chain of events which might end up with a certain duplication of the Geneva talks.

I said that "success" at Geneva seemed to me to involve something more than merely getting an agreement but involved getting the right kind of agreement. That, I thought, would be impossible unless the

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[1] According to the log of the Secretary's daily appointments, this conversation occurred at the Department of State at 5:12 p.m.

[2] See editorial note, p. 1635.

French had some alternative to complete surrender and the United States was trying to provide that. One of the preconditions to any contingent United States action would be some participation in the area by the United Nations. Also it was important from the standpoint of getting MSA appropriations. We had followed the course which seemed to us least likely to involve Geneva. I did not see how the Russians could very well make this a reason for breaking off at Geneva if the only reason why the UN talks covered Indochina was because the Russians themselves brought that element in.

Hammarskjold then spoke of possible UN Assembly action following a prospective Soviet veto in the Security Council. He said he doubted whether we could get a two-thirds vote, or certainly not more than a bare two-thirds vote, if the matter came up while Geneva was still offering some hope. I said I thought we could decide on what to do about the Assembly after the Security Council dealt with the matter, and that we did not need to make any firm decision at this time.

751G.00/5–2954 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, June 2, 1954—5 : 33 p. m.

4356. Eyes only Under Secretary and Ambassador from Secretary. Reur 4596.[2] We are gratified at progress made but believe you should warn Laniel that no statement implying anything like final agreement should be made to his Cabinet or in Parliament or otherwise now or at any time without careful prior agreement between our Governments as to precise form of words. You will bear in mind that the U.S. conditions required among other unfulfilled conditions assurances of action and participation by other governments and also that political and military conditions cannot be divorced for, as I earlier pointed out, the military situation might deteriorate to a point where a collective defense of Indochina would be impractical. Any premature or inaccurate statements which now attain publicity would cause Congressional and public reactions which might necessitate a denial or explanation here which would leave the situation worse than if nothing had been said by Laniel.[3]

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated to Geneva for information as Tedul 149.

[2] Dated May 29, p. 1635.

[3] In telegram 4421 to Paris of June 4, repeated to Geneva as Tedul 158, the Department of State reiterated the position that it was inaccurate to state that the United States and France had reached basic agreement on conditions for the military participation of the United States in Indochina. A precise statement from the French on how they proposed to meet the conditions of the United States was required. For text of telegram 4421, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 9, p. 530.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 200th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, June 3, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

The following were present at the 200th Meeting of the Council: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; Robert R. Bowie, Department of State; Robert Amory, Jr., Central Intelligence Agency; the White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

Following is a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

. . . .

4. *The Situation With Respect to Indochina* (NSC Action No. 1054–*b*)[2]

Admiral Radford stated that General Valluy, who was now in Washington, informed him that the French expect an all-out Vietminh attack on the Tonkin Delta within the next ten days.[3] They are not optimistic about withstanding such an attack. The morale of the whole French Expeditionary Corps is low, and they are tired. The Vietminh, on the other hand, had been enthused by their victory at Dien Bien Phu. In reply to General Valluy, Admiral Radford had stated that if this was the actual situation in Indochina, it seemed to him time for the French to find a new military leader. General Valluy thought that General Navarre would soon be replaced.

Admiral Radford then pointed out that there were 79 battalions and 11 Groupes Mobiles of French Union forces available for the defense of the Delta. He failed to see how the Vietminh in an open assault, unprotected by jungle terrain, could defeat French Union forces of this size. He added that the point had been reached where the use of South Korean forces in Indochina might prove useful. There would be very few reinforcements for the French troops from anywhere outside Indochina in the course of the next ten days. General Valluy, said Admiral Radford, was normally an optimist and a strong character, but he was very down-in-the-mouth when he talked to Admiral Radford last night.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on June 4.

[2] For NSC Action No. 1054, see extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 187th Meeting of the Council, Mar. 4, p. 1093.

[3] Admiral Radford conducted discussions of the military situation in Indochina with Gen. Jean Valluy, head of the French Military Mission to the United States, on June 2, June 3, and June 7. Records of these meetings are in files 751G.00/6–254; 751G.00/6–354; and Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 320; respectively.

Mr. Cutler asked Admiral Radford if he wished the Council to act on his suggestion with respect to the use of a South Korean division in Indochina. Admiral Radford said he did not, but wished to give the matter further study in the Defense Department before proposing Council action. He indicated that if the South Koreans were used they would be flown down to Indochina by U.S. planes. If nothing more were accomplished, the presence of South Korean forces might add a spark of enthusiasm and spirit which was so desperately needed at the present time in Indochina. The President commented that the issue would not come up until the French requested President Rhee to dispatch South Korean forces. They would then presumably ask the United States to fly these forces in.

As a last point, Admiral Radford stated that General Valluy was convinced that the Vietminh would insist on securing possession of Hanoi as their future capital. They would either do this by negotiation at Geneva or they would seize the city by force.

The National Security Council:[4]

a. Discussed the situation with respect to Indochina.

b. Agreed that the Department of Defense should reconsider the possible use of ROK forces in Indochina in the light of the present situation, and report to the Council whether the policy in NSC Action No. 1054–*b* should be changed.

Note: The action in *b* above subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of Defense.

5. *U.S. Policy in the Event of Overt Unprovoked Military Aggression by Communist China*[5]

. . . .

Secretary Wilson inquired as to the effect of the French loss of the Tonkin Delta. Admiral Radford replied that this would mean the loss of all the rest of Indochina to the Communists in very short order. The Communists want all of Southeast Asia, and seem to be in a fair way to get it. Mr. Allen Dulles expressed agreement with this view, and further predicted the loss of the Delta if extraordinary measures were not promptly taken to save it.

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[4] Points *a* and *b* below constituted NSC Action No. 1147, June 3, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

[5] For the entire record of the discussion of this agenda item, see volume XII.

The Vice President then asked Mr. Bowie, who had taken Secretary Dulles' place at the table, if it was not probable that the French would accept a settlement at Geneva which would be quite unsatisfactory to the United States. Mr. Bowie said that he agreed with the Vice President's fears, and said that unless the Communists were hopelessly adamant, the French were very likely to accept some kind of partition of Indochina which would be unsatisfactory to the United States. Admiral Radford, however, expressed the opinion that the French would have no choice but to fight to save the Delta, if for no other reason than that they must evacuate approximately a hundred thousand civilians of French nationality or sympathy.

The Vice President then asked Mr. Bowie what official position the United States would take in the event that the French accepted a partition solution from the Communists which the United States regarded as unsuitable. Mr. Bowie replied that theoretically, of course, the United States could initially disassociate itself from any such French agreement, but from a practical point of view we would have to recognize the boundaries established by the partition agreement if the United States proposed to try to defend the rest of Southeast Asia against Communist control. He added that the situation would be further complicated if Bao Dai refused to accept a French settlement at Geneva and asked the United States what it was willing to do if the Vietnamese continued the war.

Admiral Radford expressed the opinion that Hanoi might be the sticking point for the French in their negotiations at Geneva. If the French lose this city the result would be militarily disastrous.

. . . .

751J.00/6–354 : Telegram

The Chargé in Laos (Rives) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY VIENTIANE, June 3, 1954—7 p. m.

41. Sent Saigon 119, Department 41, repeated information Paris 29, Bangkok 16, Geneva unnumbered. I talked today with Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma who returned June 1 from Geneva and Paris and with Crown Prince Savang who is present Vientiane for closure National Assembly June 6.

Re Geneva Conference Prime Minister remarked on slow progress, expressed pessimism on chance of any result and saw end by July 15. However, was deeply grateful for support of US, UK and France in refusal recognize Pathet Lao and for determination differentiate problems Laos and Cambodia from that of Vietnam.

Approved Thai appeal to United Nations but stated France opposed to POC teams in Laos and Cambodia. Foresaw no POC Laos before end Geneva and evacuation Laos by Viet Minh.

On subject military situation felt danger for Laos over till October. By then new French divisions should be present Indochina and therefore, if necessary, help could again be sent Laos. Agreed need for speed if O'Daniel plans to be effective in time but saw delay till Geneva ended.

Was incredulous re possible internal trouble Laos and said intended invite brother Petsarath, to Laos again shortly.

Prime Minister expects return Paris in few weeks for economic talks.

Crown Prince prepared for possible trouble at closing Assembly but feels that land (*sic*) responsible if anything occurs.

Savang on O'Daniel visit expressed annoyance Lao Government's hesitation in agreeing plans and stated present war is an "all or nothing" matter for Laos. Therefore, Laos should be prepared to go all-out and must for own safety join in any effort or group formed or supported by US.

RIVES

751G.00/6-354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, June 3, 1954—7 p. m.

4694. Repeated information Geneva 350. Dept limit distribution. Geneva eyes only Under Secretary. As has been reported to Defense by MA and MAAG (Embtel 4693)[1] MAAG Paris was approached yesterday by French Ministry of Defense regarding formation of 3 new divisions for Indochina, using cadres from existing French NATO divisions now in Germany. French said they wld require equipment for these 3 new divisions and indicated that equipment cld either be delivered to Indochina from our Far Eastern stocks provided it wld be avail prior to planned arrival of divisions, or divisions wld take necessary material with them from France.

To the extent that we are unable to provide equipment, French have indicated that they will take equipment from divisions presently assigned NATO and request US to replace this equipment so as to return their NATO forces to full strength. French Defense Ministry furnishing MAAG with detailed request for equipment which MAAG will forward to Defense in due course.

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[1] Telegram 4693 from Paris, June 3, concerning the French reinforcement plan, is not printed. (751G.00/6-354)

I wld like to make foll purely political comments on this subj:

1. In order to maintain French will to resist in Indochina I feel it is most important to tell French promptly that in principle we will do whatever is necessary to get them the equipment for these divisions.

2. We should make no objection to the weakening of French NATO forces that will result from organization of these new divisions. This is particularly important in view of coming debate on EDC, as creation of these divisions will provide example of flexibility in European situation and ability of French to withdraw troops as necessary for support of French Union.

3. We shld clearly indicate our willingness to very promptly supply any equipment necessary to bring French NATO forces back up to present standards. This also very important from EDC point of view so as to indicate to French that there will be no weakening of their European military position vis-à-vis Germany.

DILLON

751G.00/6–454: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, June 4, 1954—5 p. m.

2656. Repeated information Paris 943, Geneva 193. Department telegram 4272 sent Paris repeated Geneva Tosec 269, Saigon 2418[1] was delayed in receipt due to extensive servicing. This accounts for our tardy comment.

I am in full agreement with general tenor of reference telegram and have only minor observations to make. Those are:

Re numbered paragraph 3–*c*, it might make French declaration more palatable both in France and in Asia generally were we likewise to announce intention to withdraw US technical and military assistance as soon as practicable. It must not be forgotten that in Communist and neutralist Asian eyes US is principal threat in Eastern Asia and not what is generally regarded to be a decadent France. Since Communist propaganda has already overstressed alleged unduly large role of FOA Mission here and Peking radio daily proclaims that US is sending military equipment to slaughter Asiatics, such a declaration might be useful from psychological warfare point of view.

Reference paragraph 4–*a*, it is essential that we commence forthwith to review terms of reference which now limit MAAG to purely logistical function. Under present set of rules, General O'Daniel is being asked to train Vietnamese troops with ever present French veto hanging over his head. In my opinion, we should approach French Government on terms of September 29, 1953 agreement, point out that Navarre plan no longer exists, that conditions have changed, and that new terms of reference for MAAG should be drafted forthwith.

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[1] Dated May 26, p. 1618.

Implicit in paragraph 3–*a* but not specifically touched upon is problem of ancillary agreements which will spell out turn-over by France to Vietnam of sovereignty in specific fields as, for example, control of currency, Custom Union, Civil Aviation, and Mixed Courts. French, whether through incapacity of government to move in present Parliamentary crisis or by deliberate design, have not moved at all in completing these agreements although telegrams from Embassy Paris have indicated that so far as experts were concerned, these accords were almost ready for signature. Likewise Vietnamese experts, feeding at the flesh pots, have shown no alacrity in pressing for final action. It is not enough to broadcast a fine-sounding treaty of independence without knowing exactly where Vietnamese will find themselves in respect of control of their finances, their courts, and their right to request technical assistance from any quarter, and not exclusively from France.

As for question of elections to which Department quite rightly attaches importance, it is now of less significance in Vietnam than before owing to general feeling of panic and anxiety lest entire country be lost through unfortunate armistice terms. Press has announced that decrees will presently be signed by Bao Dai providing for municipal elections and, with exception of Saigon–Cholon, for direct election of mayors. This should to some extent meet Department's requirement in this regard although it is far less than national elections or preparations for National Constituent Assembly.

Upon DeJean's return from north today, I plan to discuss with him measures which should be taken locally as suggested numbered paragraph 6. I intend to suggest to DeJean necessity of providing Vietnamese administrators and technical experts with know-how derived from actual participation in the affairs of government. Likewise, Department heads and Ministers should be given greater opportunity to participate in forward planning as this will result in sense of responsibility to the nation which has heretofore been lacking. Another suggestion which has frequently been advanced is that French, by turning over Norodom Palace to Vietnamese, would give graphic evidence of their intention to retire from this country and to confirm Vietnamese independence. Main question, however, would be whether Chief of State would return to occupy Palace.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/6–654 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, June 6, 1954—7 p. m.

2686. Repeated information Paris 953, Geneva 202. DeJean told me this afternoon General Salan departs Paris tonight with Ely, apparently to assume command ground forces Indochina under Ely's overall direction.[1]

This news strikes me much as did announcement that two cruisers *Cloire* and *Montcalm* are now enroute Far Eastern station. These six-inch-gun ships can only be utilized in final phase of evacuation Haiphong perimeter: namely, to guard withdrawal from Do Son beachhead.

Similarly, it is my conjecture that Salan, because of his extensive knowledge of Indochina, is being sent here not in any hope of conducting an offensive military campaign but to use his expertise in the administration of an armistice.

McCLINTOCK

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[1] On June 3, Gen. Paul Ely was appointed Commissioner General and Commander in Chief in Indochina. Gen. Raoul Salan was named his military deputy. In telegram 2676 from Saigon, June 6, McClintock states that the "removal of Dejean is a serious blow to furtherance of US policy in Indochina. Not only has he been the most courageous French official here, but also the only one with a clear-eyed view of what stakes we are fighting for, not only in Southeast Asia but likewise in Europe against international communism. . . . In view of our vested interest in this war, I believe that Ambassador Dillon has a right to indicate our concern that Ely be given top-notch political advisors." (751G.00/6–654) In telegram Dulte 158 from Geneva, June 7, Under Secretary Smith concurred in McClintock's estimate of Dejean's removal. (751G.00/6–754)

751G.00/6–854 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, June 8, 1954—8 p. m.

2700. Repeated information Geneva 206, Paris 958, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Embassy informed that following successful daylight attack May 30 against post of Binh Chanh, about 15 miles southwest of Cholon on road to Mytho, in which six of seven Vietnamese regular army defenders were killed, the Viet Minh kidnapped all members of Council of Notables in Binh Chanh and neighboring town of Binh Dien and destroyed all civil records.

It is believed that in anticipation of elections, the Viet Minh throughout south Vietnam are undertaking a program of terrorism directed against village notables, who presumably are only ones qualified to say which people are eligible to vote. It is also quite obviously intended to weaken control of central government by terrorizing all those who might be considered its representatives. Members of the provincial councils are also said to be special objects of Viet Minh attention and most of them are now trying to resign their posts or fleeing to the larger towns for protection.

McCLINTOCK

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

The President to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Gruenther)

SECRET AND PERSONAL [WASHINGTON,] June 8, 1954.

DEAR AL: I was struck by a sentence in your letter [1] in which you quote Pleven as saying, "It (the loss of the Delta) would start a wave of anti-allied outbursts in France with great bitterness because the Allies let us down."

Pleven knows as well as you and I do that, beginning in early 1951, every kind of presentation has been made to the French Government to induce that government to put the Indo China war on an international footing. These arguments applied both to the organization of the forces fighting the war on our side and to define the issues at stake in the conflict. In other words, all of us urged France to make certain that the world understood this to be a part of the struggle between Communism and freedom. We urged further that France not only declare her intention of making Indo China independent and that she was fighting for the right of Indo China to be independent—but that she should take steps to place the issue before the UN. At the very least, this latter action would have had the effect of legitimizing any kind of coalition that might then have been formed to fight the war.

As the conflict has dragged on, the United States has more than once offered help of a kind that would tend to keep our participation in the background, but could nevertheless be very effective. I refer to our efforts to get a good guerrilla organization started in the region, our offer to take over a great part of the burden of training native troops, and numerous offers of help in the logistic field.

Most of these have been rebuffed and for no other reason than because of France's terrible fear of the effect on her position in Morocco and in Tus [*Tunisia*], as well as her seemingly hysterical desire to be thought such a "great power" that it was beneath her dignity to accept help in the conflict.

In recent months, the French government has begun to speak out of the other side of its mouth, and has been demanding help of various kinds. But it is noteworthy that all these requests for help have been for help on France's own terms—her government has consistently insisted upon promises from us of certain kinds of technical help which we would presumably turn over to them without question to be used by them as they saw fit.

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[1] Not identified.

Yet at the same time, they have made no single effort to meet the conditions that we have insisted upon for three years as constituting the only sound basis on which any European government could be fighting in South East Asia.

There is no point of reciting here the full list of details and complaints of the kind I have alluded to. The fact is that the United States has been more than forebearing and understanding in this whole issue. We do not hear a word of the enormous sums of money we have poured into the Indo China affair, even while we were necessarily carrying 95% of the burden that feel [*fell*] upon outside nations in fighting the Korean war. Much as I like Pleven—and have admired him—I get exceedingly weary of his failure to get the facts in the case in proper perspective. I do not minimize the great blow it would be to the United States if we should lose South East Asia. To the contrary, I think it would be a calamity of the most terrible immediate and eventual consequences. But when Pleven talks about the "wave of bitterness" that will sweep over France against *us*, it seems to me that he should realize that the only answer to this one is to show what the history of the past several years has been. The help that we have given over the years has been rendered in spite of, and not because of, the French attitude.

If Pleven is worrying what the French attitude toward America is going to be, he might take into consideration also what is going to be the American attitude toward France. Take, for example, the fact that while the United States was sending conscripted soldiers to Korea to fight a war in which we as a nation never had any of our political or economic interests involved, the French refused to send conscripts to Indo China, which had been for years merely one of their colonies.

I realize clearly that a mere recitation of fact or the development of argument to show that someone else was to blame, does not in any sense repair or avoid the disastrous consequences of a lost battle or war. As you undoubtedly know, I am even yet spending days and hours trying to get a political climate established among the interested powers that would make it politically feasible within the United States to render the kind of help that our own interests and those of the free world would seem to require. But because we insist on treating everybody concerned as sovereign *equals*, it is extremely difficult to bring about the meeting of minds that is now so necessary. Even at this moment France wants nothing except commitments from us—so far as I know they have made no real concessions to our frequently repeated convictions, messages and recommendations that at times almost approached the characteristics of entreaties. Thailand, the Philippines—and in a more clandestine way—Australia, have all shown far more statesmanship and have all recognized the basic requirements of a cooperative effort more than our principal European allies, France and Britain.

We will probably continue this when you get here.

As ever, [File copy not signed]

751G.5/6–854

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Anderson) [1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 8, 1954.

DEAR MR. ANDERSON: I have had several conversations with Admiral Radford about the furnishing of United States equipment for three additional French divisions which would be formed from existing cadres and sent to Indochina, and I understand that this matter is now before the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I understand that the details of the French request have been communicated by MAAG France to the Department of Defense.

In connection with the feasibility of carrying out this operation, the interested people in the Department of State would be glad to cooperate to the fullest extent useful with the Department of Defense, in order to see if ways and means of implementing this request can be found.

Insofar as the political aspects of the question are concerned, I would like to make certain observations for your consideration, indicating the extreme importance which we attribute to our being able to assist the French in this undertaking:

1. In order to maintain the French will to continue the struggle in Indochina, it is most important to be able to tell them promptly that in principle we will do whatever may be necessary to obtain the equipment for these divisions.
2. We should not object to the weakening of French NATO divisions for this purpose. This point is especially important in connection with the EDC debate in France, as the creation of these new divisions will provide an example of the flexibility in the European situation and demonstrate the ability of France to withdraw troops as necessary to cope with an urgent situation elsewhere in the French Union.
3. The French have proposed that the reinforcements sent from the NATO area to Indochina take with them their present equipment, and that the United States furnish additional equipment necessary to bring the French NATO forces back up to their present standards. It seems

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[1] Drafted by McBride and Beigel of WE.

to me that a more expeditious as well as desirable way of dealing with this problem might be to provide additional equipment directly from United States stocks to the reinforcements arriving in Indochina. This would also avoid any difficulties in removing MDAP equipment from the NATO area, or in programming additional equipment to French NATO forces in the context of present legislative restrictions. Should it however prove that certain items of equipment are not available for such French reinforcements other than what is now in their hands, we should then be in a position to agree to the transfer of such items to Indochina and to indicate clearly our willingness to replace such equipment in the NATO area. This would be very important from the EDC viewpoint since it will demonstrate to the French that there will be no weakening of their European situation or of their military position vis-à-vis Germany.

Finally I need hardly mention the urgency of this matter and I would hope that we would be in a position to inform the French in a few days of our willingness in principle to furnish the equipment required for the three additional divisions to be sent to Indochina, after which the necessary mechanics which will be, I fully realize, complex can be worked out here.

Sincerely yours,

For the Secretary of State:
ROBERT MURPHY
Deputy Under Secretary

Editorial Note

At his news conference of June 8, 1954, the Secretary of State was questioned extensively about the Geneva Conference. His replies regarding the Indochina phase of the Conference included comments on the military situation, the prospects for united action, and the course of negotiations. His remarks included the point that the United States did not intend to deal with the Indochina situation unilaterally, nor did the Administration intend to seek additional authority from Congress to act in the matter. For the news conference statements by Secretary Dulles, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 21, 1954, pages 947–949.

751G.00/6–954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, June 9, 1954—noon.

4766. Repeated information Geneva 370. Department limit distribution. Geneva eyes only Under Secretary. Reference: Deptel 4421 [1] and Dulte 156.[2] I saw Schumann yesterday afternoon and endeavored to explain to him our need for a French statement as to how they proposed to handle their actions as described in second paragraph of reference Department telegram. Schumann had difficulty understanding just what it was we wanted at this time as he considers that the basis for an agreement in principle has been reached and that it was impossible to go further until the Geneva conference had definitely failed. He pointed out that since the basic US requirement was that any French request for military assistance must be approved by the French Parliament, such a request could not be made while there was any hope for progress at Geneva because of the strong feeling in the Parliament that everything possible should be done to reach an agreement at Geneva.

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[1] Regarding telegram 4421 to Paris, June 4, see footnote 3, p. 1659.

He then told me that Under Secretary apparently agreed that agreement had been reached in principle and he read me a telegram from Bidault reporting same conversation as that reported in Dulte 156. Bidault reported that Under Secretary had expressed pleasure that agreement in principle had now been reached. Regarding numbered paragraphs of Dulte 156 Bidault's report had following items of interest:

Paragraph 1. Bidault reported that Under Secretary agreed with him that this problem was over-complicated and should be simplified.

Paragraph 2. Bidault stated that he felt that the Thai resolution took care of this problem and he stated that the Under Secretary agreed with him that this problem had now been solved.

Paragraph 3. No difference.

Paragraph 4. No difference. Schumann however pointed out the great importance of this change of wording as "the end of hostilities" could well be interpreted to mean a state of armistice, whereas what was really meant was that troops should only be withdrawn after peace had been established. The whole Viet Minh effort has been to reach some sort of armistice that would force the withdrawal of the French troops and leave the country to them.

Paragraph 5. No difference. However, Schumann stated that he had told Bidault prior to his interview with Under Secretary that he felt that new language suggested by French was too broad and that US would require more specific pledge. Bidault reported that Schumann had guessed wrong as Under Secretary had seen no difficulties in proposed language pointing out that conditions named in new draft were inherent in sovereignty of any great power. Bidault also reported Under Secretary had said he would refer this language to Department for final decision.

Paragraph 6. No difference.

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[2] For text of telegram Dulte 156 from Geneva, June 6, summarizing a discussion between Under Secretary Smith and Foreign Minister Bidault concerning U.S. conditions for the internationalization of the conflict in Indochina, see vol. XVI, p. 1039.

Schumann then stated that in view of meeting of minds between Bidault and Under Secretary he was sure that with the possible exception of new wording suggested in paragraph 5, of Dulte 156, there were no political differences between us. He then said that he had just received a very disturbing cable from Bonnet. Before he could read it to me a call came through on the telephone from Bonnet in which they talked further about the same subject.

Subject is Valluy's negotiations regarding use of US Marines. Valluy has reported to Pleven and Bonnet that it is very doubtful if US would agree in any circumstances to sending a Marine division to Indochina. I pointed out to Schumann that US response on this subject had never been blanket pledge to use Marines but had only stated that their use would not be excluded provided an agreed upon war plan required their presence. I further said that it would depend upon the war plan which Valluy submitted as to whether or not our JCS would be convinced that Marines should be committed. Schumann said he fully understood this and would explain it further to Pleven, but he emphasized crucial importance this matter.

Comment: As I pointed out in Embtel 4503 [3] French military have assumed that any war plan which was satisfactory to our JCS would show necessity for the use of at least one Marine division. While from our point of view this problem quite properly should be judged on its military merits, we must realize that it also has strong political aspects here and that French Parliament in my opinion will not in any circumstances vote to ask for US assistance in Indochina unless government can at least make strong inference that Marines will be sent to Indochina.

Thus, most crucial part of present Franco–US negotiations from both military and political point of view would seem to be conversations Valluy is carrying on at Pentagon.

If our JCS takes position that US has not the military power to be able to afford the commitment of even one Marine division to Tonkin delta, French will draw the obvious conclusion that arguments which force JCS to such a conclusion apply with approximately five-fold effect to France. This will push them irresistibly toward abandonment of Indochina. Thus if we want French military assistance in showdown with Communists in Southeast Asia it is in my opinion vital that JCS find it possible to approve a joint war plan justifying the use of Marines.

DILLON

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[3] Dated May 24, p. 1603.

751H.00/6-954 : Telegram

The Chargé in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, June 9, 1954—9 p. m.

148. Sent Saigon 288, repeated information Department 148, Paris 122, Geneva 7. On the eve of my departure from Cambodia, where I have served for 22 months as Chargé, I paid farewell calls on the King, Prime Minister and all members of Cabinet, accompanied by FSO Herbert Goodman to whom I am relinquishing charge. It was evident from these visits that the independence that Cambodia won from France after months of negotiations has greatly solidified public support behind King Norodom Sihanouk, but at same time Viet Minh onslaughts have revealed the Kingdom's weakness when faced with regular enemy battalions. Members of Government agree that Cambodia now enjoys full internal sovereignty and that questions which remain to be settled (monetary independence, commercial independence, etc.) are matters to be discussed jointly with France and the other Associated States. The only thing that prevents Cambodia from returning to a constitutional government based on free elections is the presence of Viet Minh intruders in the country.

During my calls Cambodian officials invariably expressed doubts as to the positive results that may be expected from the Geneva Conference. There is a new awareness (for Cambodia) of the seriousness of purpose of the Communists in planning world-wide domination. The insistence by the Viet Minh Delegation, supported by that of USSR and Communist China to speak for "Free Cambodia" finally convinced those who had hopes to stay out of conflict (exemplified by Prime Minister Penn Nouth who last September said he had no quarrel with Viet Minh if they left Cambodia alone) that neutrality means national suicide. Now Cambodian officers have placed their lot with that of the US and are eager to participate in defense pact for Southeast Asia. The Cambodian Government is particularly grateful to the United States for its support of the Cambodian thesis that the Viet Minh in Cambodia are foreign invaders and their evacuation from Cambodian soil is the only acceptable solution.

The Prime Minister particularly requested that I convey to American Government the gratitude of his Government for the unflinching support given to his delegation by ours. He expressed grave concern over French and particularly British wavering in face of Viet Minh suggestion to lump three Associated States into one and same solution.

The fact must be faced that Cambodia has long mistrusted sincerity of French aims in Indochina. The negotiations of last year illustrated the inability of France to make concessions in time for them to appear as generous contributions to the aspirations of the Cambodian people.

Instead there is a feeling that without the King's northern campaigns (trip to the United States and flight to Bangkok) the French would never have given Cambodia its independence. The fall of Dien Bien Phu and the avowed inability of the French command to give any substantial assistance to Cambodia to resist the invasion of the northeastern provinces by two regular Viet Minh battalions marked the end of French military prestige in Cambodia. Now the leaders of the country unanimously look to the United States for the salvation of their country from Communism. They know that the United States has no vested interest to protect in this Kingdom and they intuitively trust not only our motives but our ability to protect weak peoples.

Cambodia wants arms to build up its army, and it wants them directly. It needs bold military leadership that will take the offensive against the entrenched rebel groups who terrorize entire areas with their sporadic raids and ambushes. General Tioulong has brought back much confidence to the same young royal army to the strength needed (estimated by MAAG at three divisions) to be able to meet any Viet Minh thrust into Cambodian territory. The United States now has in staunchly anti-Viet Minh Cambodia a potentially important supporter in the struggle against Communism in Southeast Asia. By proper handling and tactful diplomatic negotiation, the manpower resources of this country will be real asset to US foreign policy.

McClintock

751G.5 MSP/6–1054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY Saigon, June 10, 1954—1 p. m.
[Received 6:11 a. m.]

2712. Repeated information Paris 965, Geneva 211, Hanoi unnumbered. General O'Daniel yesterday saw General Ely and latter requested that US promptly take over organization and training of Vietnamese National Army apparently on a divisional basis as General O'Daniel has consistently required. O'Daniel is informing Department of Defense that he visualizes an American–French KMAG type of organization for training with French combat advisors initially to be assigned to Vietnamese regiments and divisions but not US advisors so assigned, at least in beginning phase. According to O'Daniel's understanding of conversation he would command training mission with a French deputy. Department will note however that this is in contrast to message Quat sent me (Embassy telegram 2711)[1] indicating that Ely wanted French command and US training mission subordinate to that command.

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[1] Telegram 2711 from Saigon, June 9, is not printed. (751G.5 MSP/6–954)

At all events General O'Daniel requested General Ely to place his proposal in writing and is promised a letter on Monday [2] following Ely's return from Tonkin.

Before this interview took place I lunched yesterday with Colonel Brohon, Chief of Staff to General Ely, who said that he had impression that Washington was now less eager to get into the training of Vietnamese armed forces than previously. I said that I had not received any word from Washington but that in any event neither General O'Daniel nor the Embassy had received any formal request from either French or Vietnamese Governments for a training program.

Brohon emphasized need "for Admiral Radford to send in American training officers quickly" in order that they might be on the spot before a possible armistice should freeze numbers of personnel now in Indochina. Brohon likewise repeated remark earlier made to me by General Ely that he hoped US would get into war in Indochina as quickly as possible.

I believe that we should tread softly until we see what specific proposals General Ely will formulate in writing. Department of Defense will of course give thought to all aspects of such a combined American–French training mission and to problems of command which will eventually arise. One thought which occurs to me is that French are rather patently seeking to use bait of training mission as a means to get US into this war or at least to hold bag if they have to leave Indochina.

McClintock

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[2] June 14.

State–JCS meetings, lot 61 D 417

Substance of Discussions of State–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting at the Pentagon Building, June 10, 1954, 10:30 a. m.[1]

TOP SECRET

[Here follows a list of those present (15).]

1. *U.S.-French Bilateral Military Talks*

Admiral Radford referred to a message dated June 9 from General Ely in Saigon (1) inquiring about U.S. intentions in Indochina and (2) expressing a desire to discuss the question as soon as possible with a qualified representative of Admiral Radford either in Paris on June 19, or in Saigon at another time (copy of message attached).[2]

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[1] This Department of State draft was not cleared with the participants.

[2] For text of the message, see telegram 4508 to Paris, June 10, *infra*.

Admiral Radford expressed a desire to review the whole question of the exact status of any U.S. commitments regarding Indochina, the exact status of French fulfillment of conditions which are prerequisite to any U.S. commitment, and the value of continued U.S.-French bilateral military talks in Paris.

Mr. Murphy reviewed Ambassador Bonnet's conversation with Mr. Dulles on June 9th.[3] He also read, as an example of our present position on intervention, excerpts from the Secretary's scheduled speech in Los Angeles on June 11th (copy attached).[4] Mr. Murphy emphasized that the U.S. position was clear, that we would not make a commitment at this time purely for French political purposes, and that the conditions which we had set down must definitely be fulfilled before these commitments are carried out.

Mr. Murphy added that in Ambassador Bonnet's conversation with the Secretary, the Ambassador had expressed surprise that we had not already made up our minds on intervening in the war.

Further discussion revealed agreement (1) that by playing fulfillment of French conditions against U.S. commitment, the French were practicing a form of blackmail, holding a sword of Damocles over our heads; (2) that the repercussions in France and in NATO of U.S. action in Indochina were incalculable but obviously serious; (3) that the French pretended to assume that the President of the U.S. had not entirely precluded the use of Marines in Indochina, and had begun talking in terms of half a dozen divisions; (4) that many French actions could be diagnosed as frantic, last minute careening in all directions to place responsibility for developments in Indochina on the U.S.; and (5) that the idea of using Korean troops in Indochina should be considered only on the invitation of the Vietnamese, and not the French.

Admiral Radford inquired what reply should be made to General Ely. The Admiral indicated that he was prepared to send a representative to Paris in accordance with General Ely's request, but that it was the Admiral's view that U.S. intervention could not be a piece-meal operation. For example, he added, we could not maintain a training mission of some 3,000 men in Indochina—unless the French made a definite commitment not to conclude an unfavorable armistice which would leave such a mission in an equivocal position.

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[3] The discussion between Secretary Dulles and Ambassador Bonnet on June 9 is summarized in telegram Tedul 178 to Geneva of the same day; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 1100.

[4] The attachment does not accompany the source text. On June 11, Secretary Dulles delivered an address before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on the subject of security in the Pacific. In the course of the address, he listed the following conditions which would have to be met before the President and Congress would be justified in asking the American people to agree to intervention in Indochina: "(1) an invitation from the present lawful authorities; (2) clear assurance of complete independence to Laos, Cambodia and Viet-Nam; (3) evidence of concern by the United Nations; (4) a joining in the collective effort of some of the other nations of the area; and (5) assurance that France will not itself withdraw from the battle until it is won." The Secretary also stressed that the United States would consider overt Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia or the Pacific as a deliberate threat to its own security. For the text of the address, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 28, 1954, pp. 971–973.

Referring further to the question of a training mission, reference was made to General Valluy's conversations on the subject with Admiral Radford, and to General O'Daniel's despatches from Saigon, which indicated a mistaken concept of the status of this question.

It was obvious to Admiral Radford that the French were under the erroneous impression that American intervention had been agreed upon at a high level, while on the contrary, we had informed the French that only if the French Government fulfilled certain specified conditions, the President of the U.S. would then ask Congress for authority to use armed forces in Indochina.

It was the consensus of the group that collateral talks, such as those going on simultaneously between the French and ourselves in Paris on the one hand, and the Geneva conference talks on the other, were dangerous and would create further confusion.

The Meeting Agreed:

(1) To suspend the talks regarding training until the basic question of conditions versus commitments was clarified; and

(2) To reply to General Ely in the sense that until there is a Government decision on the part of France, there will be no talks with General Ely in Paris or elsewhere on any implementation of intervention.

Admiral Radford undertook to inform General Valluy in this sense, and Mr. Murphy undertook to inform Ambassador Dillon in Paris.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

4. *Assistance to French in Evacuation of Tonkin Delta*

Mr. MacArthur said he would like to touch very briefly and informally on the question of U.S. assistance to the French in the evacuation of the Tonkin Delta. He was apprehensive that if the situation deteriorated further the French would "call on us at one minute to midnight" for all-out aid in evacuation. Admiral Radford indicated that the plan was ready, except for decision as to Command arrangements. The Admiral asked the State Department to review the situation as to any U.S. commitment to the French to help them in this exercise.

Mr. MacArthur indicated that the State Department does not consider that the Truman–Pleven talks in 1951 constituted a binding commitment.

In referring to the magnitude of this problem Admiral Radford indicated that it might involve something in the order of 100,000 French civilians, plus roughly 100,000 French military around Haiphong.

751G.00/6–1054 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, June 10, 1954—7 : 40 p. m.

4508. Eyes only Ambassador. Following translation text message from Ely to Radford received evening June 9:

"I have not yet made a survey of the military situation, especially in Tonkin. However, it seems to me that the decision I will have to take regarding the operations will rest on the US intentions, in the present situation, as well as those they anticipate in the future.

"Therefore, I would very much like to have, either in Paris, where I expect to be possibly on the 19th June, or here in Saigon, as soon as possible, an exchange of views with a qualified representative of Admiral Radford, in order to know what I can expect on the part of the U.S."

Prior to French decision to request internationalization, we consider undesirable to start yet another series conversations which would inevitably provoke on French side all kinds hopes and interpretations with regard basic issue US intervention which would only cause further confusion. In other words, it is our feeling that we should not be eased into a series of piecemeal commitments resulting from collateral military conversations in the absence of an understanding with the French Government based on our general proposal described in Tedul 54.[2] Radford has accordingly informed General Valluy orally that US position was given to Ambassador Bonnet by Secretary June 9 and that he is not in position at this time to respond to Ely's request for conversations on subject raised his message.

With regard to US training Vietnamese troops, we feel that situation Viet Nam has degenerated to point where any commitment at this time to send over US instructors in near future might expose us to being faced with situation in which it would be contrary to our interests to have to fulfill such commitment. Our position accordingly is that we do not wish to consider US training mission or program separately from over-all operational plan on assumption conditions fulfilled for US participation war Indochina.

MURPHY

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[1] Drafted by Tyler of WE. Repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 2565 and to the Under Secretary at Geneva as Tosec 392.

[2] For telegram 4023 to Paris, May 11, repeated to Geneva as Tedul 54, see p. 1534.

751G.00/6–1054 : Despatch

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET

No. 579

SAIGON, June 10, 1954.

Subject: Alleged presence of Soviet or Chinese Submarines in the Gulf of Tonkin

More for the record of the Department than with intent to convey news, I desire to report that only today the Embassy Naval Attaché informed me that fairly reliable indications had been received in April and early May of the presence of either Soviet or Chinese submarines in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Naval Attaché had of course, by his own channels, reported these facts to the Department of the Navy as they materialized.

According to the French naval staff in Saigon, it was learned from a radio intercept of a Viet Minh message that between six and eight Soviet submarines were operating in the Gulf of Tonkin based on Hainan Island. This was in the latter half of April.

Independently, at the end of April and early May, United States sources established radar contact with unidentified submarines in the Gulf of Tonkin. Three of these radar sights were made by aircraft in the last week of April and another sight was made by radar from an American freighter plying in the Gulf of Tonkin, which was challenged at night by blinker from one of two submarines, one lying off the port beam of the freighter and the other on the starboard quarter. The blinker signals were clumsily given and therefore it can be surmised that the submarine was of Chinese Communist registry.

It is not impossible in my estimate that the radio intercept reporting eight Soviet submarines in the Gulf of Tonkin was a cover and deception maneuver by the enemy designed to intimidate the French from more resolute action in the defense of the Tonkin Delta. Certainly the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin, by virtue of their shallow depth, are ideal for mining, and the French naval capability in the Far East to counteract such measures is exceedingly limited. Furthermore, the French naval forces Far East have had very little experience in ASW, the crews are untrained, and the vessels, with the exception of two DE's, are not fitted for hunter-killer operations. The French naval air arm, however, with its Privateers, should be in a position to render more effective opposition to a submarine campaign than the French surface fleet.

Since apparently the freighter radar sighting of May 5, when it was challenged by an unidentified submarine, is an authentic incident, it would seem to me that this likewise might be part of an over-all cover and deception maneuver since, if in fact either the Soviet or

Chinese Communist navies seriously intended to mine the Gulf of Tonkin, they would do so secretly.

My estimate is strengthened by the coincidence of dates, since the intercepted radio message and the sighting of unidentified submarines came at a time when the French Government was endeavoring to make up its mind whether or not to defend Tonkin. In consequence, it would have been an obvious maneuver for the enemy to seek to shake French determination in this regard and to endeavor to establish the spectre of a submarine menace to the line of communications to Tonkin and the Haiphong evacuation perimeter.

ROBERT MCCLINTOCK

751G.00/6–1154

Memorandum by Fisher Howe, Acting Special Assistant for Intelligence, to the Acting Secretary of State

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 11, 1954.

Subject: SNIE–63–2–54: *The Effects of Certain Possible Developments on the Military Security and Political Stability of Laos and Cambodia Through 1954* [1]

1. If a negotiated settlement placed the Communists in a position which would enable them eventually, but not immediately, to dominate Vietnam, the Laotian and Cambodian Governments could probably maintain control for some time.

2. If, as a result of a negotiated agreement with the Communists covering all of Indochina, French and Viet Minh regular units were actually withdrawn from Laos and Cambodia (leaving Viet Minh irregular forces still operating in those countries), native forces could probably not for long successfully resist the Viet Minh without increased outside support.

3. If outside support took the form of a security system involving multinational guarantees for the security of Laos and Cambodia and could be implemented in time, that would probably permit Laos and Cambodia to maintain their security. The requirements of such a security system would be: (*a*) adequate MDAP-type aid; (*b*) effective protective forces appropriately located in the area; and (*c*) assurance of assistance in the event of internal subversion as well as external attack.

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[1] SNIE 63–2–54, summarized here, was dated June 9. The copy of the report which was transmitted to the Acting Secretary with this memorandum is not filed with it. A copy of SNIE 63–2–54 is in INR–NIE files.

4. If Laos and Cambodia were partitioned, probably nothing but military occupation of those countries would assure their continued freedom from Communist control.

By agreement of the IAC this estimate will be released to the governments of the UK and Australia.

FISHER HOWE

751G.00/6-1154 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, June 11, 1954—3 p. m.

2731. Repeated information Paris 969, Geneva 216, Bangkok, Hanoi unnumbered. USOM representative, Matheron, at Hue reports recent tension that area has been allayed but morale is extremely low and people are filled with disgust toward central government, Vietnamese National Army, French, and themselves. They have, in fact, come to accept idea of partition as inevitable, although they continue to oppose such a measure. In face of belief there is no other alternative, they feel strongest possible government must be established in part of Vietnam remaining to non-Communist side. In Hue anti-Commies opposing national government still consider Ngo Dinh Diem, whom they continue to expect arrive Vietnam, best candidate to head such a government and have continued activity to promote his advent to power, many trips to Saigon being made to propagandize with this objective in mind. Matheron believes this element under no illusion as to Diem's administrative ability to head country, but it clings to him as one "pure" symbol capable of attracting Vietnamese masses.

Matheron stated it is generally believed in central Vietnam that Giao's regional troops made a far better showing in operation "Atlante" than did Vietnamese National Army.

MCCLINTOCK

751G.00/6-1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, June 11, 1954—6 p. m.

4812. Repeated information Saigon 598 Geneva 381. Department limit distribution. Saigon eyes only McClintock. Geneva limit distribution. Re Deptel 4508.[1] Since question of US training of Vietnamese troops considerably predates recent conversations regarding possible united action, French have always considered training as a separate problem. If last paragraph of reference telegram represents definite decision that US is now no longer interested in helping with the training of the Vietnamese national army except in the framework of united military action in Indochina, I feel that we should promptly inform French on political level of this change in our position so that there will be no possibility of future misunderstanding.

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[1] Dated June 10, p. 1678.

I assume that Department has considered the fundamental political and psychological importance of this decision including (1) the fact that French Government will most probably consider that this means definite and final writeoff of Indochina by US and so may very well use such a decision by US as an excuse for accepting Viet Minh terms; (2) the probability that our opponents in France may in the future describe such a decision as an attempt on our part to forcefully influence France to request internationalization of the war; and (3) the effect of such a decision on Vietnamese morale.

Department's instructions are requested as to whether I should inform French of this new US position.

DILLON

751G.00/6–1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, June 11, 1954—9 p. m.

4820. Repeated information Geneva 382, Saigon 599. Limited distribution. Saigon eyes only McClintock. I saw Maurice Schumann at his request this afternoon and he said that he wished to try to dispel some of the confusion regarding the US position in Indochina. He then gave me four or five telegrams to read, all of which had been sent on either the ninth or tenth of June. In two cases there were identical reports on conversations between Tyler and an unnamed counselor of the French Embassy, and between Radford and Valluy, both of which were reported as categorically stating that for political reasons (i.e., difficulty of obtaining congressional approval) US could not envisage use of marines in Indochina in any circumstance. Two other telegrams reported a conversation with the Under Secretary at Geneva and Bonnet's conversation with the Secretary, in both of which the position regarding marines was confirmed to be as previously stated by me to Schumann in Embtel 4766.[1] I pointed out that the question of whether or not the US would intervene militarily was a political decision and that all I could say was the Secretary's position on marines, which had always been consistent, must be assumed to be the US position.

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[1] Dated June 9, p. 1670.

Schumann then went on to agree with the US position that French had not as yet asked for US intervention to [*in*] accordance with the conditions laid down in Deptel 4023.[2] However, he said that French had thought they had made it clear, and if not, wished to make it very clear now that they had taken decision to request assistance in case of failure at Geneva. He referred to portions of Laniel's and Bidault's speeches to the Assembly in which they both said that in the event there was a failure at Geneva the government would bring the question back to the French Assembly for discussion as to what should be done. He said that was meant to be a clear indication that at that time they would request the Assembly to approve a request for US military assistance. He said that this was generally so understood in Parliament.

I told Schumann that the only difficulty with this position of the French Government was that it was completely indefinite as to time, as there was no clear indication as to when the Geneva Conference would end. Schumann answered that was correct but that the conference could not go on very much longer, and he referred to Eden's recent speech at Geneva.

Schumann then said that the worst thing that could happen would be for the French Parliament to request US aid and then to have it refused. He said this would have a catastrophic effect on Franco-American relations. (I agree with his views on this.) I then told him that I assumed that once French had made the decision to request intervention they would indicate it to me with a detailed statement as to how they intended to carry out the various conditions listed in Deptel 4023, and that I would then refer such a request to Washington to see if the US was still prepared to go ahead.

I told Schumann that only if there was an affirmative answer did I see the necessity arising of the French Government going to the Parliament. In other words I am in agreement with the French position that they should have advance indication of a favorable response from US before asking their Parliament to formally approve a request for US assistance.

I then said that I thought it would clear his mind if he read the advance draft of section IV of the Secretary's Los Angeles speech.[3] Schumann read this section with great interest and said it was an excellent speech and he only regretted that it had not been made much sooner. He felt it would be helpful in clarifying the US position. (Bonnet had not reported anything about the speech.)

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[2] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

[3] Regarding the speech by Secretary Dulles at Los Angeles, June 11, the fourth section of which dealt with Indochina, see footnote 4, p. 1676.

He then referred to the President's Thursday press conference.[4] He said that in the form in which it was reported here in Paris it certainly gave a different impression from the Secretary's speech and that it was being generally interpreted as a final decision by the US to write off Indochina.

In this connection he read me the lead editorial in tonight's issue of *Le Monde* which, he said, unfortunately and probably for the first time, accurately reflected general public opinion here at the moment (translation of editorial which has been called to our attention from other sources follows in later telegram).

I then told Schumann of Ely's request to Radford as contained in Deptel 4508,[5] and Schumann fully agreed that it would be confusing to have another set of conversations on US intentions. When I left he said he now clearly understood US position.

DILLON

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[4] At his news conference of June 10, President Eisenhower indicated that he did not intend to request special authority to take action in Indochina from Congress before it recessed for the summer. For the record of the news conference, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pp. 545–554.

[5] Dated June 10, p. 1678.

751G.00/6–254 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, June 12, 1954—1 p. m.

4551. Limit distribution. Your 4662 [2] states that Ely pointed out that question of US training native forces is but one part of overall plan for intervention. Yet in your 4812 [3] you state French have always considered training as a problem separate from possible united action.

We sought unsuccessfully to obtain French agreement to US training native forces as part of our support of the Navarre Plan which was then looked upon as a comprehensive, long term program for winning victory in Indochina. This proposal of ours was at that time rejected. We consider it most unwise to get large numbers US instructors as well as US prestige engaged in Viet Nam unless there is some new overall program which would give training program chance for success.

At same time, Ely's position seems clear that French have been opposed to give US responsibility for training unless US agreed to intervention. It may be that in effort draw US into conflict without having US conditions on intervention met, French military may now seek US training in advance of US commitment to intervene without combat forces. As set forth Deptel 4508[4] and above, we are resolved not to get drawn into training program when due to deteriorating conditions and lack of overall program to reverse situation training program has virtually no chance of success. If French are not going to agree to only kind of armistice which now seems possible at Geneva, but are going to fight for more than protection of expeditionary corps, possibility may exist for development some program to reverse present downhill trend. But this seems unfortunately most unlikely to us.

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[1] Drafted by Fisher of WE. Repeated to Saigon as telegram 2588 and to Geneva as Tedul 191.

[2] Telegram 4662 from Paris, June 2, is not printed. (751G.00/6–254)

[3] Dated June 11, p. 1681.

Under present circumstances, and particularly in view of three points you make Embtel 4812, believe you should clarify US position only if you are forced to do so and should in interim reply to French that we are in agreement with Ely's position expressed Embtel 4662.

DULLES

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[4] Dated June 10, p. 1678.

751G.00/6–1354 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, June 13, 1954—2 p. m.

2756. Repeated information priority Paris 978, priority Geneva 224. Last night Buu Loc told me that he had been instructed by Bao Dai to present his resignation as Prime Minister. He will be replaced by Ngo Dinh Diem. Buu Loc said that his resignation would be presented next week and Diem would probably fly out here at same time. Buu Loc hoped he would receive another diplomatic assignment and seemed to be thinking in terms of regaining his old job in Paris or possibly of replacing Tran Van Kha in Washington.

This morning Dejean asked me to call at the Palace. He is profoundly disturbed at change in Vietnamese Government at this particular time coincidental with collapse of Government in France.[1] Dejean feels that Diem is too narrow, too rigid, too unworldly, and too pure to have any chance of creating an effective government in Vietnam.

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[1] On June 12, the government of Joseph Laniel was defeated in the National Assembly on the issue of Indochina by a vote of 306 to 293. The government resigned the following day. In despatch 3373 from Paris, June 30, the Embassy transmitted a detailed analysis of the debates leading to the fall of the Laniel government. (751G.00/6–3054) For the record of the discussions and voting on Indochina of June 12, see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats* pp. 2972–2983.

Dejean is telegraphing Bidault that upon his arrival in France next week he desires Bidault's agreement that he, Dejean, call on Bao Dai and urge necessity of creating a government here of national unity. Oddly enough Dejean's slate corresponds almost exactly with my proposal for a Council of Regency. He would have a triumvirate of Buu Loc, Tam and Tran Van Huu. Dejean would advocate that Tam with his terrier-like energy and competence as a policeman be given combined portfolio of Defense and Interior. Huu would have Finance and National Economy, while Buu Loc would have Foreign Affairs, with possibly Dinh as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs who would be able to carry on either here or in Geneva as occasion might require. Tri would remain as Governor of North where his presence was vitally needed.

I told Dejean that I concurred in his recommendations and that I would for my part urge that if Under Secretary Smith sees Bao Dai similar representations be made from our side. Likewise I told Dejean that the Under Secretary had made some pointed remarks to Foreign Minister Dinh as to Bao Dai's absence from his country at this critical time.

Dejean said "If I were Bao Dai I would go to Hanoi and stay there until the bitter end." He pointed to example of aged King of Laos who had steadfastly refused to vacate Luang Prabang and had instead organized local defense there. Dejean emphatically agrees with my judgment that to give up Hanoi will mean end of war and will be political catastrophe far greater than any Dien Bien Phu. However, he is apprehensive that the generals for narrow military reasons will counsel falling back on their cozy Haiphong perimeter.

I remarked to Dejean that, speaking of generals, it seemed a fairly empty trip for General Ely to fly all the way to Paris to consult with a non-existent government. I added that from the point of view of our joint policy it would seem highly unfortunate that at very moment after French Government had fallen and Vietnamese Government was on point of being placed into hands of a religious mystic there should be no top Frenchman left in Indochina to seek to guide the course of events.

Dejean leaves Tuesday morning,[2] Ely on Thursday. Sole remaining political officer will be Bordaz who is a cipher so far as influence on the Vietnamese is concerned.

Dejean said that he would suggest to General Ely that in view of turn of events it might be wise for him to remain here. Dejean said he had every confidence in Ely's selflessness and in his correct strategic appreciation. However, Ely is ignorant of Indochinese affairs and he may be tempted to rely unduly on Salan whose intentions and counsel Dejean deeply distrusts.

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[2] June 15.

Dejean said most privately that Navarre will not be permitted to carry out his intention of making a holiday trip to Japan for fear that he may say too much to the press. Navarre will likewise return to France next week but not in same airplane with Dejean. Latter said this morning, "I have no intention of getting off the same plane with General Navarre. I did not create Dien Bien Phu. He did."

Dejean asked if I would send a word to Ambassador Dillon indicating that he would very much like to call on him. I said I thought it of the highest importance that Dejean get in touch with Dillon as soon as possible and likewise on his arrival in Geneva that he have a long talk with the Under Secretary.

McClintock

751G.00/6-1454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET

Paris, June 14, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 7:26 p. m.]

4841. Repeated information Geneva 393. Department eyes only Secretary. Geneva eyes only Under Secretary.

1. In all probability one of first acts of any new French Government will be request precise statement immediate and future US intentions regarding military intervention Indochina.

2. During past week, I have gathered the very definite impression that because of (*a*) our reluctance to send ground forces to Indochina; (*b*) deterioration of military and political situation in Indochina during last month; (*c*) extreme reluctance, if not refusal, of ANZUS partners to consider joining US in any military intervention in Delta area, the chances of US responding favorably to French request for military assistance even after they have met all conditions are approximately nil.

3. Hardening of Communist position in Geneva as indicated by Molotov and Chou En-lai last week would seem to indicate that Communists no longer fear possibility of US military intervention in Indochina provided there is no overt Chinese attack. It would seem, therefore, that Viet Minh and Chinese will not accept any armistice which does not clearly pave the way for Communist takeover in Indochina.

4. Lacking the possibility of US military support, it would seem to be only a question of time, weeks or a few months at very most, before French are forced to accept Viet Minh terms. In the meantime, there is the constant risk of an all-out assault on the Delta which could lead

to a serious French reverse, if not total annihilation of expeditionary corps in Tonkin.

I have continually pointed out that such a reverse might have a disastrous effect on French public opinion. Today I am more certain than ever that such would be the case. Rightly or wrongly, US would be blamed by French public opinion for having built up French hopes of intervention and then for having failed in the crisis. The result could well be a neutralist government in France that would reduce French military commitments to NATO and would, at the same time, be completely intransigeant on question of German rearmament. Such a government would also, in all probability, make a strong effort to strengthen relations with the Soviet Union and to recreate the wartime Franco–USSR alliance in order to prevent German rearmament.

From this distance, I cannot judge what the effect of such French actions would be on American public opinion and particularly on our Congress, but I suspect that it might lead to an irresistible demand for the recall of some, if not all, of our troops from Europe, which, in effect, would mean the end of the North Atlantic Alliance followed eventually by the isolation of the Western hemisphere.

5. In view of these very serious and grave dangers which we will run if we allow the French to be defeated militarily in the Delta, and if my assumption in paragraph 2 above is correct, I recommend that you give serious consideration to promptly informing the French that because of either (*a*) the deterioration of the military situation in Indochina or (*b*) the reluctance of the ANZUS powers to take action, or both, the President is no longer prepared to request military intervention from the Congress even if the French should now fully meet our conditions. While such action on our part would hasten what now appears to be the inevitable loss of Vietnam and might cause a certain additional temporary loss of face for the US, it would put the French on notice that they should promptly accept the Viet Minh armistice terms and thus would save the French Expeditionary Corps from possible military disaster. In the event of a withdrawal from Indochina under such circumstances, I would not foresee any serious or long term repercussions on France's position in the North Atlantic Alliance. If we allow the French to continue to fight in the false hope that in the event of a crisis in the Delta, they may get US military assistance, the best we can hope for is to delay the Communist conquest of Vietnam by a few months, while we risk the very existence of the North Atlantic Alliance.

From my viewpoint here in Paris, the possibility of a few months delay in the Communist takeover of Indochina does not seem at all commensurate with the risk of the possible collapse of the defense of Western Europe.

6. While I have several times made it clear, both to Laniel and Maurice Schumann, that, as indicated in paragraph 8 of your Tedul 185 from San Francisco,[1] our decision would have to be made in the light of "conditions at the time"; this is not at all clear to French public opinion and is not even very clear to Schumann himself, as he has no means of knowing how we will judge "the conditions at the time". Therefore, what I am in effect recommending is that we adopt your suggestion contained in paragraph 8 of Tedul 185 of putting a time limit on our intervention offer with the additional proviso that I would suggest that the time limit be now.

DILLON

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[1] Paragraph 8 of telegram 1 from Secretary Dulles at San Francisco, June 10, relayed to Geneva as Tedul 185, read as follows: "As regards internationalization, it should be made clear to the French that our offer does not indefinitely lie on the table to be picked up by them one minute before midnight. As we instructed Dillon to tell Laniel, our offer was made in the light of conditions at the time, and conditions could so deteriorate that no point intervention could be successful [*sic*]. The French cannot permit Geneva to be dragged out indefinitely while the situation in Indochina deteriorates and then at same time at sometime in July expect our position to be precisely as it was in April. I believe we should begin to think of putting a time limit on our intervention offer." For the complete text of the telegram, see vol. XVI, p. 1117.

751G.00/6–1454 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, June 14, 1954—8:58 p. m.

4579. Eyes only for Ambassador and Under Secretary from Secretary. FYI. It is true that there is less disposition now than two months or one month ago to intervene in Indochina militarily. This is the inevitable result of the steady deterioration in Indochina which makes the problem of intervention and pacification more and more difficult. When united defense was first broached, the strength and morale of French and Vietnam forces were such that it seemed that the situation could be held without any great pouring-in of U.S. ground forces. Now all the evidence is that the morale of the Vietnamese Government, armed forces and civilians has deteriorated gravely; the French are forced to contemplate a fall-back which would leave virtually the entire Tonkin Delta population in hostile hands and the Saigon area is faced with political disintegration.

What has happened has been what was forecast, as for example by my Embassy Paris 4117 Tedul 78 of May 17.[2] I there pointed out that probably the French did not really want intervention but wanted to have the possibility as a card to play at Geneva. I pointed out that the Geneva game would doubtless be a long game and that it could not be assumed that at the end the present U.S. position regarding intervention would necessarily exist after the Communists had succeeded in dragging out Geneva by winning military successes in Indochina. This telegram of mine will bear rereading. That point of view has been frequently repeated in subsequent cables.

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated to Geneva for information as Tedul 199.

[2] *Ante*, p. 1575.

I deeply regret any sense of bitterness on Bidault's part, but I do not see that he is justified in considering unreasonable the adaptation of U.S. views to events and the consequences of prolonged French and U.K. indecision.

I do not yet wholly exclude possibility U.S. intervention on terms outlined Paris [*Deptel*] 4023 Tedul 54.[3] UK it seems is now more disposed to see movement in this direction but apparently the French are less than ever disposed to internationalizing the war.

DULLES

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[3] Dated May 11, p. 1534.

751G.11/6–1454 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, June 14, 1954—6 p. m.

2765. Repeated information Paris 984, Geneva 231. Last night I was considerably startled when General Alessandri, who for some years has been military advisor to Bao Dai, told me with great vehemence that he should not return to Vietnam. He said, "Bao Dai has missed every opportunity. It would do more harm than good for him to come back at this late hour." General de Langlade who was present during this conversation expressed opinion that for Bao Dai to return to Vietnam now and claim western support would merely be repetition of story in China when US backed corrupt members of Kuomintang against triumphant and, by comparison, relatively honest Communists.

The two generals and I later spoke to Colonel Le Roy of Vietnamese National Army who is famed throughout Cochin-China for brilliant work for pacification which he accomplished and which has now practically been undone since he was relieved of responsibilities in southern command. Le Roy, who is devout Catholic, said he could still raise fifty thousand men from Catholic peasants in south Vietnam. However, he said with great passion "we want neither the Communists nor the return of the Mandarins. We do not want Bao Dai".

I saw my British colleague this morning who volunteered comment that it has for some time been too late for Bao Dai to return and "it would do more harm than good if he should come back".

All of these opinions were volunteered and not solicited by me. I feel there is no great risk of Bao Dai's surviving the rigors of heroism irrespective of what representations might be made to him by General Smith at Evian or Ambassador Heath in Laos [*Cannes*]. However, I am glad to see from recent telegrams both from Department and Geneva that caution will be exercised in not implying any promises to His Majesty. Despite previous telegrams reporting belief of Vietnamese leaders that Bao Dai should come back, I now feel that hour has passed when his return would make any difference to fate of Vietnam except possibly further to complicate our task. We might be stuck with a champion we would not wish to champion.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/6-1454 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, June 14, 1954—7 p. m.

2770. Repeated information Paris priority 985, Geneva 232. After the exiguous diplomatic corps of Saigon, numbered six in all, presented DeJean with a silver pot this evening, DeJean requested me to join him in his office to read an urgent top secret telegram addressed to General Ely from General Valluy.

This telegram represents Admiral Radford as insisting on utility of bringing three Korean divisions for fighting in Indochina and as adding (which I told DeJean would be manifest impossibility) US Naval lift could accomplish transport of all three divisions to this theater within one week.

I told DeJean that Department had kindly given me some background on this problem (Department telegram 2551, repeated Geneva Tedul 178, Paris 4476)[1] and gave DeJean a verbal paraphrase of what Secretary had told Bonnet. I likewise outlined in brief conditions precedent which US had wisely laid down in discussions between Ambassador Dillon and Laniel. I said I thought that until French formed government it was unnecessary to get excited about Korean or any other divisions since the Secretary's conditions had yet to be fulfilled.

. . . .

Re training aspects of overall problem, I observed to DeJean that we had not received any request from French Government for assistance in this regard and that although I much admired energy and desire to be ahead of time of General O'Daniel, I had told him that we would not undertake training mission until General Ely's own conditions in this respect had been met; namely, that training program was but one phase of overall integrated program.

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[1] Telegram Tedul 178 to Geneva, June 9, repeated to Paris as 4476 and to Saigon as 2551, summarized a conversation of the same day between Secretary Dulles and French Ambassador Bonnet concerning the possible participation of U.S. armed forces in Indochina. For text of Tedul 178, see vol. XVI, p. 1100.

I asked DeJean to arrange interview tomorrow for me with himself and Ely. This pleased former Commissioner General very much, and I shall be glad to meet with both French representatives as DeJean's presence will not make Ely less a General nor DeJean less a diplomat.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/6–1554

Memorandum for the Record[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 15, 1954.

Secretary's Meeting, Tuesday, June 15, 1954, 11:45–1:30.

Participants: Messrs. Murphy, MacArthur, Merchant, Bowie, Key, Popper, McIlvaine,[2] Galloway, Tyler, Gullion, Sturm, Draper.

I. Mr. MacArthur mentioned that the Under Secretary planned to delay his departure, that he was planning a visit to Bern this Friday and that Bidault will not be available in Geneva until Saturday. The Secretary drafted Tedul 201 as a reply.[3]

II. *UN Appeal by Laos and Cambodia*[4]—Mr. Key said that before we could do much moving on the UK idea of an UN appeal by Laos and Cambodia, we would have to see specifically what the UK has in mind. The Secretary said that he would discuss this with Churchill and Eden but wondered what difficulty existed in moving under Article VII of the "Uniting for Peace Resolution". The Secretary thought this article envisaged something less than military measures i.e., economic, social sanctions. Mr. Popper pointed out that it could be used to meet military threats with military measures and that therefore it was important to see what the UK actually had in mind for such a contingency. The Secretary concluded that until we see clearly what will happen in Vietnam in the way of a settlement at Geneva, there is no use in embarking on some Laos–Cambodia adventure. The Secretary asked parenthetically what issues, in this connection, had been more clearly defined since the onset of the Geneva Conference. The list was enumerated: 1) a coalition government is unacceptable to both sides; 2) the UK has admitted failure of their partition plan;

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[1] The identity of the drafting officer is not indicated on the source text.

[2] Robinson McIlvaine, Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.

[3] Telegram Tedul 201 to Geneva, June 15, concerned the departure of Under Secretary Smith from Geneva. (396.1 GE/6–1554) See footnote 2 to telegram Dulte 181, vol. XVI, p. 1148.

[4] For documentation on this subject, see *ibid.*, p. 1083 ff.

3) disarming of the irregular troops is still in abeyance; 4) the discussions have broken down into a question of establishing groupements for the respective sides which might then be swapped back and forth in the negotiating process; 5) etc. The Secretary asked if we had in any way prevented the French from obtaining an agreement acceptable at least to them, if not to the US and UK. The answer was "no" although it was admitted that our position could be construed as rather rigid.

III. Dillon's latest cable (4841)[5] quite naturally flowed into the discussion at this point. The Secretary said that the French confusion over the issue of US intervention was being reflected in the somewhat fuzzy reporting of General Smith and Dillon on the subject. For example, he could not understand all the inferences in General Smith's Dulte 179.[6] Mr. Murphy said that Dillon "listened and reported" but did little in the way of affirmative action. He thought that a delicately handled USIA project or some public relations activities on the part of Embassy Paris might be useful. The Secretary said that he might drop a useful hint in his off-the-record dinner meeting with some news correspondents tonight.

The Secretary explained that he wished to meet this problem by having the President send a letter to President Coty of France which would reaffirm our confidence in France while gently lifting the erratic French locomotive back on the rails, phrased somewhat as follows: "We have confidence in France, we are standing by her side, but it should be clear that the decision to intervene will be made under the circumstances of the moment". Mr. Merchant has action.

Mr. Bowie at this time presented his idea that it was time to look at the problem of Indochina from another direction in order to prevent a complete collapse of free world morale, even in the US, if we permitted Vietnam to fall through the present train of events. He said that the dilemma for the US was created by our withdrawing from Geneva because the Communist proposals are unacceptable and yet at the same time will not do anything to bolster militarily the French position.

He said this meant in effect that the Viet Minh would wipe out the French in Hanoi and surge on down the peninsula and thus obtain even more than they had asked for at Geneva. He could not envisage the totality of this Communist victory upon free world and neutralist opinion, except that it would be tremendous and thus probably disastrous. He considered this not only in terms of Nehru and other Asiatics swinging to the Communist side, but also in its demoralizing effect on

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[5] Dated June 14, p. 1687.

[6] For text of telegram Dulte 179 from Geneva, June 14, reporting on a Smith–Eden–Chauvel meeting, see vol. xvi, p. 1132.

NATO and probably even on US public opinion, when the facts finally soak in. His simile was that this may be the straw which breaks the camel's back of resistance throughout the free world to Communist aggression.

He suggested presenting the French with an affirmative proposal to defend South Vietnam and define in specifics what we have in mind. We could make the French an offer of four divisions, drawn from various sources including the US, to hold the so-called "Line B" or "Line of stabilization" which the French explained in the five-power military talks could be held with forces of such magnitude, leaving the present French security forces in the South to manage Viet Minh terrorist activities. Assuming this five-power talk presentation to be reliable, Mr. Bowie said that we could make this offer with several trump cards in our hand.

We would make clear this would be a "holding operation" and would not turn into a war of liberation for the North. This would help with Asian public opinion, as well as elsewhere. The French would find the offer difficult to turn down because it would serve to protect the security of the French Expeditionary Corps even in Hanoi. The fact that the British had proposed a partition along practically the identical line would provide a lever to force the volunteering of commonwealth troops to help hold this line. In back of this line, we could perhaps build up a truly nationalist Vietnamese Government and a suitable national army. ("At least, it's worth trying".) The effect of this sort of US intervention might provide the stimulus to overcome the Vietnamese lethargic and jaundiced view toward solo French activities to protect their colonial power status.

While admitting that this might bring on overt Chinese intervention he thought it worth the chance. If the Chinese intervene, he said he was in complete agreement with the JCS views, that is, to pull out of Indochina and clobber the Chinese at the heart of their power, wherever that might be, and in spite of the consequences.

Mr. Merchant also agreed with this last point and said he thought that by obtaining two divisions of the four from our forces in Korea, we would tend to *decrease* the possibility of Rhee precipitating a conflict unilaterally. The Secretary interjected that it would also *increase* the chances of Rhee opening a war because the time involved in a logistic operation of this magnitude might make Rhee act ugly and decide to do something while we were still in strength in Korea. Mr. Merchant disagreed, thinking the chances were still greater that Rhee would not take unilateral action.

Mr. Bowie concluded that in view of the stakes we should, if necessary, consider full mobilization to obtain these four divisions. He said he saw no reason on earth why the free world couldn't scrape up four divisions some place.

The Secretary said this proposal in effect meant that we were telling the French that Indochina could only be saved if French troops were not doing the fighting. Mr. Bowie and Mr. Merchant agreed that this indeed was the case.

751G.00/6–1554 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY

SAIGON, June 15, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 3:17 p. m.]

2787. Repeated information Paris 990. Although I sympathize with Navarre's position, I do not feel that we can usefully send him any message along lines indicated Deptel 2597 repeated Paris 4558.[1] Navarre departed from his so-called "Navarre Plan" last December without notice to us although he knew our 385 million-dollar budgetary support was predicated on fulfillment of that plan. Furthermore, Dien Bien Phu, for which he alone is responsible, will probably prove to be political Stalingrad of this war. Since all French generals on leaving Indochina write books, for us now to send him sympathetic message would merely provide him with a new chapter of exculpation.

McCLINTOCK

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[1] Telegram 2597 to Saigon, June 14, read as follows: "Do you think it to advantage U.S. that some message be passed Navarre prior his departure? Occasion his relief would appear give opportunity for expression sincere understanding of magnitude of job he has held and any other points you consider appropriate." (751G.00/6–954)

751G.00/6–1554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET

PARIS, June 15, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 9:13 p. m.]

4862. Repeated information Geneva 399, Saigon 608, Hanoi 23. Embtel 4756, (Saigon 589) June 8.[1] We saw Ngo Dinh Diem last evening and discussed with him AFP reports from Saigon to effect Buu Loc would offer resignation this week and that he, Diem, had accepted in principle form new government. Diem said Buu Loc had been reluctant resign as agreed for reason he presently engaged in transferring as much money as possible out of Vietnam but that Bao Dai had that day sent word to him to do so at once. According Diem, premature disclosure to press Saigon of proposed change in premiership undoubtedly emanated from Buu Loc who bitter over being forced resign. Diem said that while he anticipated opposition to his appointment from those elements in France anxious to conclude a settlement IC conflict on partition or best terms available, he did not consider such opposition as might now manifest itself as likely interfere with his appointment. This connection, Diem said that it would be necessary replace present Vietnamese delegation at Geneva with men less amenable to French direction, and that it would be necessary to find stronger man Buu Loc to carry on job High Commissioner Paris.

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[1] Telegram 4756 from Paris, June 8, regarding the possibility of Buu Loc being replaced as Premier of Vietnam by Ngo Dinh Diem, is not printed. (751G.00/6–854)

Diem said that as soon as he had received the official request from Bao Dai to form government, which he expects will be forthcoming shortly, he would devote approximately three days thereafter to consultation with French officials at Paris prior to departure for Saigon. He said he particularly desired to see Ely on his return end of this week since in his, Diem's view, most important matter was to get on with formation autonomous Vietnamese Army. This connection, he said it would be necessary replace General Hinh but admitted he did not know who could take over job. Diem emphasized that loss of delta through military defeat or partition would mean loss of all of Vietnam to Viet Minh and hence must be held. He admitted, however, that time remaining was short. His only solution is greater and more direct US assistance.

Embassy comment: In the more than one-hour conversation, which was essentially a monologue, Diem criticized everyone from Bao Dai down, and while he left no doubt as to his sincerity of purpose, we could not help but gain distinct impression that if he finds himself in position Prime Minister shortly, he may have little to offer other than to reiterate that the solution of the Vietnamese problem depends on the assumption of increased responsibilities by US. If that should prove to be the case, it would then appear that a change in the present Vietnamese Government is not likely to affect appreciably course of events with respect to Vietnam.

DILLON

751G.00/6–1554: Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, June 15, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 9:55 p. m.]

2786. Sent Paris 989, Geneva 235. I saw Ely this afternoon. De Jean after consideration felt he would drop out of interview but I talked with him before I met the General and had long conversation afterward. Ely made following points:

1. Military situation in delta is precarious. French Union and Vietnamese troops are "very, very tired". Furthermore enemy holds ap-

proximately two-thirds of all villages in delta and, although French air power can use "bulldozer tactics" in annihilating populated areas, this really affords no strategic solution. I asked Ely if he did not think his defense perimeter was too close in, but he said he had not sufficient force to extend it farther and desired to take advantage of shorter lines and concentration of force. Ely clearly indicated his personal doubt that delta could be held unless outside reinforcements of between two and three divisions were forthcoming.

2. I asked Ely if he was forced to evacuate the Haiphong perimeter where his troops would go. Would they be brought back to France or Africa, or would they, as I hoped, continue to fight in Indochina? Ely said so long as he was Commander in Chief they would continue to fight. He dwelt with great earnestness on need to build dam against Communism in Southeast Asia. He had not decided militarily what line might best be defended, but he intended, as long as he was responsible, to prevent any further encroachment of Communism in Indochina and specifically Vietnam, even if he lost Tonkin.

3. Ely said if he were to accomplish his mission he would have clearly to know where US stood. I replied in light of recent parliamentary developments in Paris he must be himself keenly aware of disabilities under which democracies operated. I said I could not imagine a President of the United States who would in his own senses appeal to Congress for permission to send troops to Indochina if it were to support a government in France which had been voted into office by 99 Communist votes. I then went over painstakingly the conditions precedent before our President could even undertake to present request to Congress for military intervention: (*a*) signature of treaties of independence; (*b*) satisfactory assurances of united action by other interested powers including UK, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Philippines plus France; and, finally approval of Congress. I said what might help most of all to speed up course of these events would be establishment of worthy government in France determined to back up Ely's policy in Indochina.

4. Ely said he had sent a message to General Valluy declining Admiral Radford's suggestion that three Korean divisions be sent here forthwith. He said this would merely be falling into trap set by Singhman Rhee for enlarging war against China, and that he was not prepared to consider suggestion as a militarily serious one so far as Indochina was concerned.

5. Ely concurred in my estimate of present low estate Vietnamese Government, expressed feeling that Ngo Dinh Diem would probably prove ineffectual in rallying elements here. I told him De Jean's suggestion for a government of national union comprised of Buu Loc, Tam and Huu was good one and said on my own hook I had more than a month before recommended abdication of Bao Dai and establishment

of a council of regency made up of these same men with Tri and [*or?*] Quat as Prime Minister. I said, however, I thought both French and we had been much too nice to our Vietnamese clients and if they were to be made independent they should be made to act like independent people. The time had come to sever the umbilical cord and to make the baby grow up. I thought we should have to put frank and friendly pressure on Vietnamese to pull themselves together if there was going to be a government on this side comparable to that on the other side.

6. General Ely asked if I thought he should call on Bao Dai when he returns to France. I said many people had called on His Majesty with equivocal results. Personally I was becoming fearful that in view of Bao Dai's increasing unpopularity in France, he might come back here and be a greater headache locally than he was on the Riviera. I said what was more important for General Ely was to get in immediate contact with General Smith and Ambassador Dillon who were two Americans in Europe most *au courant* with rapidly shifting political situation, in Geneva, Paris and Washington, so far as it bore on Indochina.

7. Ely confirmed that he leaves for Paris June 17, said despite absence of responsible Ministers he thought he could make his views known in influential circles, and that he would insist on his basic theme which was that France itself could be lost if Indochina were lost.

McCLINTOCK

INR–NIE files

National Intelligence Estimate

SECRET
NIE 63-4-54

WASHINGTON, 15 June 1954.

PROBABLE MILITARY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA OVER THE NEXT 30 DAYS (15 JUNE–15 JULY)[1]

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable military and political developments in Indochina over the next 30 days (15 June–15 July).

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, this estimate was "Submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence. The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

"Concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 15 June 1954. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Director of Intelligence, AEC, and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction."

The cover sheet also indicates that this estimate superseded NIE 63-3-54 of May 21, p. 1595.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. That no cease-fire agreement is reached during the period of this estimate.

2. That French policy with respect to Indochina will not undergo a radical change with the next 30 days.*

THE ESTIMATE

I. *Military Developments*

1. The effects of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the progress of the Geneva negotiations will continue to be significantly reflected in the attitudes of all participants toward the war. The Viet Minh have maintained a high level of activity, particularly in the Red River Delta. The Viet Minh can be expected to exploit to the full extent of their capabilities any opportunities for decisive action which might result from these operations or from a further political and psychological disintegration in Vietnam. The French are concentrating their efforts in maintaining their general position in the Red River Delta. The French command is reorganizing and strengthening the defense of vital areas in the Delta, primarily to counter the Viet Minh threat to the security of the French Expeditionary Corps, and secondarily to hold as much of the Delta as possible pending the outcome of the Geneva negotiations.

2. Except for 10 regular battalions held in the general area of Dien Bien Phu, the redeployment of Viet Minh forces from Dien Bien Phu to base areas has been virtually completed. Two infantry divisions and the artillery division are now in base areas immediately northwest of the Delta. Two additional infantry divisions have arrived in base areas southwest of the Delta. In addition to the above forces, up to 17 battalions have been assembling in the Thai Nguyen region, ostensibly for reorganization and advanced training. These forces bring the total Viet Minh troop strength within and in the proximity of the Delta to 94 infantry battalions, 1 artillery division, 110 district companies, and 40,000–50,000 militia of lower combat effectiveness.

3. Opposing the Viet Minh the total French Union force strength in the Delta including recent reinforcements from Laos and North Africa is 109 battalions, including 9 mobile groups and 6 parachute battalions, plus supporting artillery, tanks, and armored cars. Approximately 60 percent of the infantry strength is composed of Vietnamese battalions of the Vietnamese National Army. There are also approximately 80,000 auxiliary troops and militia of low combat effectiveness. By 15 July, an additional mobile group will have arrived

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*This assumption will be reviewed in the light of French political developments in the immediate future. An amended estimate will be made if required. [Footnote in the source text.]

from North Africa and at least 1 or 2 more mobile groups will have been formed from units withdrawn from static defenses.

4. The Viet Minh has a substantial capability for sabotage and terrorist activities throughout much of Vietnam, particularly in such key cities as Saigon, Haiphong, Hai Duong, and Hanoi. In Hanoi this capability has probably increased as a result of the influx of Viet Minh agents among civilian refugees entering the city. The rail and road line between Hanoi and Haiphong have been disrupted frequently and periodically despite preventive measures of the French Union forces. Although the Viet Minh will continue to engage in sabotage and terrorist activities, we believe that they will use their total capability, including uprisings in the cities, only in conjunction with an all-out military assault.

5. Since the fall of Dien Bien Phu there has been noticeable decline in the morale of French Union forces. Recently, one Vietnamese militia battalion deserted, one Vietnamese regular Army Groupe Mobile refused orders to go into action, Vietnamese resistance to conscription has increased and further Vietnamese defections within the next 30 days may be expected. On the other hand, French and Vietnamese troops have been engaged in local actions with no indication of a seriously impaired will to fight. If there are substantial Viet Minh victories or the Vietnamese become convinced that the French are abandoning the capitol, Hanoi, and substantial parts of the Delta, we believe increased and serious defections would occur among Vietnamese units. In these circumstances, however, the French Expeditionary Corps and some Vietnamese units would continue to fight.

6. Although there is no positive indication of Viet Minh intentions with respect to the Delta, throughout the period of this estimate the Viet Minh will be capable of launching a major assault against the Red River Delta. The Viet Minh may soon undertake such an assault on the Delta because of the political advantages to be gained at Geneva by such action, or because they have become convinced that French Union forces have become demoralized and that Viet Minh capabilities for assault combined with those of sabotage, terrorism, and uprisings would prove decisive in the Delta, except for limited beachheads in the Haiphong area. The Viet Minh will also believe that the French will be handicapped by lack of initiative and the necessity of tying down considerable numbers for this positional type defense. The Viet Minh will weigh these considerations against the obstacles imposed by terrain and weather and against the fact that the French Union forces will approach their maximum strength within the perimeter during this same period and will be superior in numbers, firepower, air strength, and logistic support.

7. We estimate that the most likely Viet Minh course of action will be to increase their present level of operations during the next 30 days and to continue attacks on French Union strong points, especially in the Delta. It is possible that elements of the Viet Minh battle corps, redeployed from Dien Bien Phu, will be committed in the Delta during this period to increase the weight of Viet Minh attacks. The Viet Minh objectives will be to reduce the area under French control, to demoralize the Vietnam Army and militia, and reduce the capacity of the LOC between Hanoi and Haiphong to such an extent that the French position in Hanoi becomes untenable. Although we consider it likely that French Union forces will suffer some reverses, they will probably be able to retain possession of their key strong points and prevent the prolonged severance of the LOC between Hanoi and Haiphong.

8. If, as a result of the foregoing course of action, the Viet Minh should develop an opportunity to initiate a major attack, the French Union forces have the military capability to hold Hanoi during the period of this estimate. However, if the Viet Minh achieve military successes in the Delta and French control of the native elements in critical areas of the Tonkin Delta deteriorates, the French may withdraw toward the Haiphong perimeter. Moreover, even in advance of determined military pressure by the Viet Minh, concern for the integrity of the French Expeditionary Corps and for the security of the loyal population in Hanoi might induce the French to evacuate Hanoi and withdraw toward the Haiphong perimeter. A major attack would probably be accompanied by uprisings, sabotage, and terrorist activities which would almost certainly multiply and aggravate the difficuties of the French. In any event, the French could almost certainly hold Haiphong during the period of this estimate. The French position at Haiphong will be strengthened by the arrival of two cruisers now enroute.

II. *Political Developments*

9. Barring the unlikely event of a large-scale Viet Minh invasion, Laos and Cambodia will probably retain their present uncertain political stability during the next 30 days if the French continue to provide support.

10. The political situation in Vietnam will probably continue to deteriorate during the period of this estimate. Treaties of independence and association with France have now been initialled, but the impact of this action has not been sufficient to bolster Vietnamese morale or add to the strength of the ineffective Vietnam Government. Even if the present government is supplanted during the period of this estimate, it is unlikely that the present trend of disintegration could be arrested in the absence of a substantial improvement in the military prospect

of the French Union forces. Factionalism has become extreme and the Vietnamese central government is virtually paralyzed. If the Vietnam central government should disintegrate, this fact by itself would not cause the French to lose the ability to maintain order in the regions controlled by the military forces.

INR–NIE files

Special National Intelligence Estimate

TOP SECRET LIMITED DISTRIBUTION WASHINGTON, 15 June 1954.
SNIE 10–4–54

COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO CERTAIN US COURSES OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA[1]

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Chinese Communist and Soviet reactions to the courses of action and consequent situations indicated below.*

THE ESTIMATE

Part I

ASSUMPTIONS

A. The treaties of independence between France and the Associated States will have been signed.

B. A regional security grouping including at least the Associated States, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, France, and the United States, and possibly including also New Zealand and the United Kingdom, will have been formed.

C. The Associated States will have publicly requested the direct military participation of members of the regional grouping in the war in Indochina.

D. The French will have undertaken to continue at least the present level of their military commitment in Indochina.

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, this estimate was "Submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence. The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

"Concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 15 June 1954. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Director of Intelligence, AEC, and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction."

*The assumptions and estimative requirements stated herein were furnished to the intelligence community for the purposes of this estimate. We interpret the hypothetical action as occurring within the next twelve to eighteen months. [Footnote in the source text.]

Requirement 1

To estimate the initial Chinese Communist and Soviet reactions to the participation of US air and naval forces with French Union forces and token Thai and Philippine forces in coordinated ground, naval, and air operations designed to destroy the Communist military forces in Indochina. Air operations would be limited to targets in Indochina. Nuclear weapons would be employed if their use were deemed militarily advantageous but nuclear attacks on the Indochinese civil population as a target system would be avoided.

Chinese Communist Reaction

1. The intervention of US and allied forces in Indochina probably would cause the Chinese Communists to believe that sooner or later they would have to decide whether to accept the defeat of the Viet Minh or to intervene in force in order to try to prevent such defeat. Their decision would probably rest mainly, though not exclusively, upon their weighing of the risks and disadvantages arising from the Viet Minh defeat against the likelihood of involvement in major war with the US and the probable consequences of such a war for Communist China. Available evidence gives no unmistakable indication of what the Chinese Communist decision would be. On balance, however, we believe that the chances are somewhat better than even that the Chinese Communists would decide to take whatever military action they thought required to prevent destruction of the Viet Minh, including when and if necessary, open use of Chinese Communist forces in Indochina.†‡

2. The nature of the assumed US action is such that ample warning would almost certainly be given in advance of actual operations. The Chinese Communists have the capability now to intervene quickly and in such force as to drive French Union forces out of the Delta. The Chinese Communists might choose to exercise this capability before US intervention could be effected.

3. We believe it somewhat more likely, however, that even if the Chinese Communists had determined not to accept the defeat of the Viet Minh they would not intervene openly immediately following

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†The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, recommends deletion of the last sentence of this paragraph and would substitute the following:

"However, their decision would be largely determined by the Chinese estimate of the probable extent and effect of US initial action." [Footnote in the source text.]

‡The Director of Intelligence, USAF, believes that the last sentence of this paragraph should read as follows:

"Communist China will probably not choose knowingly any course of action likely to expose its fundamental national strengths in war with a major power. However, we believe that Communist China's strength for conducting various kinds of warfare is such, and the motives and judgment of its leaders are such as to make Communist China's courses of action dangerously unpredictable under outside pressure of any appreciable magnitude." [Footnote in the source text.]

the assumed US intervention. They might estimate that US air and naval forces could not, in the absence of US ground forces, decisively alter the course of the war. They might therefore consider their intervention unnecessary at this point and might postpone final decision as to their course of action until they had observed the initial scale and success of the allied military operations and had estimated the probable nature and extent of US aims in the conflict.

4. In this connection, US use of nuclear weapons in Indochina would tend to hasten the ultimate Chinese Communist decision whether or not to intervene. It would probably convince the Chinese Communists of US determination to obtain a decisive military victory in Indochina at whatever risk and by whatever means, and of the consequent danger of nuclear attack on Communist China. Whether this conviction would precipitate or deter Chinese Communist intervention would depend on the military situation in Indochina at the time, the observed military effect of the use of nuclear weapons, and the observed political and psychological effect of such use, particularly its effect on the coherence of the regional security grouping and the Atlantic alliance.

5. In any case, the Chinese Communists would almost certainly greatly increase their logistic support, delivery of arms and equipment, and technical assistance to the Viet Minh. The Chinese Communists would probably increase their deliveries of AA weapons and might send in Chinese AA gun crews. Moreover, the Chinese Communists would probably deploy ground and air units near the Indochina border in order: (*a*) to warn the US and its allies, and (*b*) to have forces ready either to intervene on behalf of the Viet Minh or to defend the southern border of China.

6. While maintaining a posture of military readiness, the Chinese Communists would intensify political and propaganda activities designed to exploit anti-Western and anticolonial feelings of the indigenous population of Indochina and the war-fears of neutralist Asian nations and of certain US allies. They would also seek to label the US as an aggressor. In the meantime and throughout the period of military operations, the Communists would almost certainly agitate and propagandize for a "cease-fire" and political settlement, which would preserve the Communist position and prospects.

Soviet Reaction

7. In the assumed situation, the USSR probably would estimate that the US action, though limited to air and naval forces, would considerably increase the risks of unlimited war between the US and Communist China. The USSR would probably prefer that such a war not develop out of the Indochina situation. Nevertheless, the USSR would assure Communist China of continuing military assistance. The USSR

would also give complete diplomatic and propaganda support to Communist China and the Viet Minh regime.

Requirement 2

To estimate Chinese Communist and Soviet reactions to the success of the operations envisaged in the assumptions above (i.e., to the impending effective destruction of the Communist forces in Indochina).§

Chinese Communist Reaction

8. As stated in Paragraph 1, we believe that the chances are somewhat better than even that the Chinese Communists, in the assumed situation, would intervene militarily to prevent the destruction of the Viet Minh. If they decided to do so, we believe that the exact timing and nature of their action would depend on various factors, but principally on the scope and character of the US/allied operations they were seeking to counter.‖¶

Soviet Reaction

9. In this assumed situation, the USSR would probably continue to support the Chinese Communists. If the Chinese Communists intervened openly in support of the Viet Minh, the USSR would rapidly increase military assistance to Communist China. The Soviet diplomatic and propaganda campaigns against the US would continue full-scale, and the USSR might ask the UN to condemn the US as an aggressor. Thinly veiled threats of Soviet involvement in the fighting and references to the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950 would multiply.

Part II

ASSUMPTIONS

A. The treaties of independence between France and the Associated States will have been signed.

B. A regional security grouping including at least the Associated States, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, France, and the United

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§The Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army, believes that the results in this requirement could not be achieved by the unbalanced and insufficient forces envisaged. [Footnote in the source text.]

‖The Director of Intelligence, USAF, believes that this paragraph should read as follows:

"Communist China will probably not choose knowingly any course of action likely to expose its fundamental national strengths in war with a major power. However, we believe that Communist China's strength for conducting various kinds of warfare is such, and the motives and judgment of its leaders are such as to make Communist China's courses of action dangerously unpredictable under outside pressure of any appreciable magnitude." [Footnote in the source text.]

¶The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believes that paragraph 8 should read as follows:

"Communist China would conclude from the assumed impending destruction of Communist forces in Indochina, by limited forces employing nuclear and conventional weapons, that its open military intervention would invite an extension of similar action to Communist China, and would, therefore, probably not intervene militarily." [Footnote in the source text.]

States, and possibly including also New Zealand and the United Kingdom will have been formed.

C. The Associated States will have publicly requested the direct military participation of members of the regional grouping in the war in Indochina.

D. The French will have undertaken to continue at least the present level of their military commitment in Indochina.

E. The Chinese Communists will have openly intervened with military forces in Indochina in order to counter US direct participation as defined in Requirement 1.

Requirement 3

*To estimate Chinese Communist and Soviet reactions to an extension of allied offensive air operations to include military targets in Communist China directly supporting Communist military operations in Indochina or directly threatening the security of Allied forces in the area.*** *Nuclear weapons would be employed in these operations if it were deemed militarily advantageous to do so, but nuclear attacks on the Chinese civil population as a target system would be avoided.*

Chinese Communist Reaction

10. We consider it probable that before intervening in Indochina the Chinese Communists would have accepted the likelihood of US air attacks against military targets in China. Consequently, they would not feel compelled to withdraw their forces from Indochina solely as a result of the initiation of the air operations assumed above. At the same time, we believe that the Chinese Communists, in order to prevent further destruction to this area of China and particularly to avoid the spread of unlimited US attacks to the whole of China, would intensify efforts to induce the US to enter negotiations for a settlement which would preserve the Communist position and prospects in Indochina.

11. Meanwhile the Chinese Communists, to the full extent of their capabilities, would prosecute the war on the ground in Indochina and attack allied air bases, aircraft carriers, and other installations directly supporting allied operations in the area. They would, however, probably try to keep the war centered in Indochina and, as a consequence, probably would confine their attacks to such directly supporting bases and installations.

12. The use of nuclear weapons under the restrictions given above would greatly increase Chinese Communist concern about US intentions but probably would not by itself cause them to adopt new courses of military action at this time. However, they would threaten nuclear retaliation. They would also exploit to the fullest resultant psycho-

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**In this requirement we interpret targets "directly supporting" Communist military operations to be generally south of the Yangtze River and to consist primarily of transport lines, troop concentrations, and air fields in the area. [Footnote in the source text.]

logical opportunities and in particular would charge that the US was using weapons of mass destruction on the civilian population.††

13. The Chinese Communists would attempt by all means possible to convince other Asian nations that the US had undertaken to destroy the Chinese Communist regime in order to thwart its efforts on behalf of an indigenous independence movement. If the Chinese had not previously done so, they would probably appeal to the UN to brand US action as a threat to the peace.

Soviet Reaction

14. In this assumed situation, the USSR would greatly increase its military assistance to Communist China, especially supplying modern aircraft and small naval vessels, possibly including submarines, with Soviet personnel to train and advise the Chinese and probably to participate in air defense operations. The USSR would probably not openly commit combat units of the Soviet armed fores and probably would not release nuclear weapons for Chinese Communist use.

15. The Kremlin would also continue its diplomatic and propaganda campaigns against the US, undertaking in the UN to brand the US as an aggressor if this had not previously been attempted. The USSR would support Chinese charges concerning the use of nuclear weapons against civilian populations. At the same time, the USSR would probably advise the Chinese Communists to negotiate for a cessation of hostilities on the basis of the *status quo* at the time and would try to establish a position as peacemaker.

Requirement 4

To estimate Chinese Communist and Soviet reactions to the following additional allied courses of action, undertaken subsequently to those above:

a. Extension of allied offensive air operations to additional selected military targets in Communist China, including the use of atomic weapons under the same conditions as above.

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††The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believes this paragraph should read:

"Nuclear weapon attacks on Communist China would undoubtedly result in a much greater Chinese Communist reaction than nuclear attacks on the Indochinese battleground. In addition, such attacks would probably indicate to the Chinese Communists a US willingness to exploit its superiority in nuclear weapons and delivery capability to force them out of Indochina. Since the nuclear attack contemplated in this requirement is of a limited nature, the Chinese Communist rulers would retain control of the government and country and, with the initial attacks, they would probably make urgent appeals to the USSR for nuclear weapons and additional military assistance. They might also increase the tempo of their military operations and would undoubtedly endeavor to induce the United States to enter negotiations in the hope of forestalling further attacks. A Chinese Communist decision to withdraw or not would be dependent primarily upon continued or increased US nuclear attacks and other US action as well as upon Soviet reaction. It is believed, however, that the Chinese Communists would be willing to withdraw from Indochina rather than be subjected to further destruction of their homeland." [Footnote in the source text.]

b. Naval blockade of the China coast.
c. Seizure or neutralization of Hainan.
d. Chinese Nationalist operations against the Chinese mainland.

Chinese Communist Reaction

16. As a consequence of this allied broadening of the war, the Chinese Communists would probably conclude that the US was prepared to wage unlimited war against them. They would continue to defend themselves to the limit of their capabilities and would probably make vigorous efforts to secure the full participation of the USSR. At the same time, they would intensify their efforts to end the war by negotiations, and might eventually indicate in some way their willingness to withdraw from Indochina in order to obtain a cease-fire.[‡‡] If unable to obtain a cease-fire agreement, the Chinese Communists would accept the fact of unlimited war with the US and would wage such war to the full extent of their remaining capabilities.

Soviet Reaction

17. In this assumed situation, the USSR would continue to provide military assistance to Communist China as indicated above, but would probably refuse Chinese Communist demand for full Soviet participation in the war. The Kremlin would strongly urge the Chinese Communists to negotiate for a cessation of hostilities on the basis of withdrawing from Indochina.[§§] If the Chinese Communists could not obtain a cease-fire agreement, the USSR would provide Communist China with military assistance in every way short of openly committing combat units of the Soviet armed forces in operations against US and allied forces outside Communist-held territory. The USSR would provide military resources and equipment for Chinese Communist attacks on US bases or US forces anywhere in the Far East. At this stage of the conflict, the USSR might provide Communist China with nuclear weapons and the technical personnel required for their use.[‖‖][¶¶]

[‡‡] The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, and the Director of Intelligence, USAF, suggest that the words "might eventually" in this sentence should be replaced with "would probably." [Footnote in the source text.]

[§§] The Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army, recommends the deletion of "on the basis of withdrawing from Indochina," believing that at this state of the conflict the Kremlin would not willingly acquiesce in the surrender of any Communist-held territory in Indochina or elsewhere. [Footnote in the source text.]

[‖‖] The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, and Director of Intelligence, USAF, believe that this sentence should read:

"We do not believe that the USSR would release nuclear weapons for Chinese Communist use." [Footnote in the source text.]

[¶¶] The Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army, [would] substitute for the last sentence:

"It is also believed that the USSR would give serious consideration to making a substantially greater military contribution including nuclear weapons and the technical personnel required for their use." [Footnote in the source text.]

18. The USSR would continue its diplomatic and propaganda campaigns against the US, insisting that the Soviet aim was purely the defense of China against outright aggression. The USSR would also begin at least partial mobilization of its own military forces on a war basis. It would issue thinly veiled threats of general war, suggesting attacks on Western Europe and on the continental US, but would probably confine its operations to the defense of China so long as the US did not attack Soviet territory.

Requirement 5

*To estimate Chinese Communist and Soviet reactions to the success of the foregoing operations (i.e., to the impending effective destruction of the Chinese Communist capability to conduct military operations outside the borders of Communist China).**

Chinese Communist Reaction

19. Unless the USSR was willing to make an unlimited commitment of Soviet forces to prevent the success of the assumed US and allied operations, we believe that the Communist Chinese, under the assumed circumstances, would accept any US terms for a settlement which preserved the integrity of China under the Chinese Communist regime.

Soviet Reaction

20. In this assumed situation, we believe the USSR would urge the Chinese Communists to accept any US terms for a settlement which preserved the integrity of China under the Chinese Communist regime.† So long as the fighting continued, however, the USSR would continue its aid to China.

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*The Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army, believes that the results assumed in this requirement could not be achieved by the unbalanced and insufficient force envisaged. [Footnote in the source text.]

†The Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army, would add "and retained a Communist foothold in Indochina." [Footnote in the source text.]

751G.00/6–1654

Memorandum for the Files by the Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs (Key)

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] June 16, 1954.

Subject: Conversation between The Secretary and Mr. Key re Vietnamese Appeal to the United Nations

In response to my request for guidance with respect to the position which I should take regarding the Vietnamese Ambassador's desire to obtain our views about bringing the Vietnamese case to the attention of the U.N., Secretary Dulles stated:

1) We should not attempt to reach any decision until after we have had an opportunity to consult with General Smith upon his return here next week, especially so in view of the fluid situation in Vietnam and the uncertainty about Bao Dai's future. If Bao Dai is repudiated by the Vietnamese, we may wish to throw our support to another group.

2) The Secretary approved my receiving the Vietnamese Ambassador. There would be no objection to furnishing the Ambassador whatever technical information he requests and I should confine myself mainly to listening to what he may have to say.[1]

3) The Secretary agreed that the French should be informed about the Ambassador's call.

DAVID MCK. KEY

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[1] Assistant Secretary Key met with Tran Van Kha, the Vietnamese Ambassador, on the afternoon of June 16. Key's memorandum of that conversation, dated June 17, read in part as follows: "I told the Ambassador that I thought such an approach [by Vietnam to the United Nations] was technically quite possible, but said that from the political standpoint we could not yet see clearly how or when it would be advisable to embark on it. I said we wanted to see General Smith on his return to Washington so that we might consider the matter in the light of the situation at Geneva." (751G.00/6–1754)

751G.00/6–1654

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 16, 1954.

Participants: The Secretary
M. Henri Bonnet, French Ambassador
Livingston T. Merchant

The Ambassador of France called on the Secretary late this afternoon at his own request. His purpose was to transmit to the Secretary the contents of a personal telegram which he had just received from Bidault. He had not waited to have a translation made but read it himself in free translation. Bidault, incidentally he said, had returned to Geneva but would be back in Paris June 17.

Bidault's telegram covered four related questions. It started out by referring to the discussions which had been going on between the French and the United States for some weeks concerning possible U.S. intervention in Indochina. Bidault said there had been agreement reached on "the major part of the U.S. conditions" and that the French had thought they had understood our position. However on June 11 a member of the U.S. Delegation at Geneva had told a member of the French Delegation that the United States Government wished to maintain until the end of the negotiations its freedom of action, that it desired no announcement concerning any agreement be made in the French Assembly, and further that a military judgment would be needed at the time of intervention to determine its feasibility.

Bidault's message went on to say that on June 12 an official of our Embassy in Paris had told a French official that when the French reached a final decision the United States Government would study the situation in Indochina to see if at that time intervention was feasible.

In the light of these developments Bidault asked if there was any use in continuing the negotiations.

The second point made by Mr. Bidault was to note that he had made no statement in the Assembly concerning these negotiations and that this had given him considerable trouble during the debate. He referred in this connection to the Secretary's speech at Los Angeles.

Thirdly, Mr. Bidault said that the clear impression had been created in France, and he believed in the Soviet Union, that the threat to the Chinese which American intervention would represent had now dissolved.

Lastly, the Bidault message said that the French cannot go on in Indochina alone. They are appreciative of the dollar assistance we have given them and he would regard it as ironic if the intervention which was refused to France in Indochina was later granted to defend Malaya.

Bonnet added that it seemed to him that in the past week the situation had deteriorated and that the impression was general that there was no hope of U.S. intervention and that the Communists knew it.

The Secretary replied by reading to the Ambassador the first paragraph of his telegram of May 17* which reported our belief that the French were primarily interested in employing the possibility of our intervention as a card to be played at Geneva. The Secretary went on to point out that it was impossible to give an indefinite option on U.S. intervention. He pointed out that the military estimate of what is required today to restore the situation in Indochina is a great deal higher than it was six weeks ago. It would require four or five divisions and in effect commit our strategic reserve to a remote quarter of the world to go into action against a third-rate power, whereas six weeks ago it had appeared that sea and air forces with a token land force would have been sufficient. The Ambassador indicated skepticism that at any time only token land force would be required. The Secretary further referred to the declining morale and rising defections in the Vietnamese forces.

The Ambassador said that Bidault sees no point in going on talking since there is no U.S. counterpart for a French commitment. Moreover he said he has the impression that in the past two weeks any effort to prepare U.S. opinion for intervention has been relaxed.

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*Deptel 4117 to Paris rptd Geneva Tedul 78. [Footnote in the source text. For text of telegram 4117, see p. 1575.]

The Secretary repeated that the situation had changed. He stated that he had no doubt Congress is prepared to respond to a Presidential request and that whereas we had no objection to the French using the possibility of our intervention for negotiating purposes with the Communists, the fact was that the Laniel Government had never requested our intervention and had never met one of our basic conditions which was the expression of a firm intention to continue fighting in Indochina. The Secretary added that given what seemed to be the existing temper of the Assembly, it seemed unlikely that any Government successor to Laniel would take such a resolute position.

There followed a further exchange along the same lines in which Ambassador Bonnet reiterated his argument that everything had been practically agreed and then the U.S. appeared to draw back and further qualify its willingness to intervene. The Secretary reiterated forcefully the point that the United States could not give an indefinite option to any other country to take such serious action with all its risks of global consequences when it had no indication as to the time or conditions under which the option might be exercised. He reiterated our willingness to reopen the negotiations immediately with any new French Government which was serious in its purpose to carry on the war in the absence of honorable terms with the Communists.

At the close of the conversation the Ambassador asked if we would come in if a new Government requested it. The Secretary asked in reply, "Under what conditions?" He pointed out that the military situation would be totally different if in the meantime Tonkin had been lost. He went on to say that when there is a French Government with adequate Parliamentary backing for continuing the war we will sit down and talk to them and give them a prompt reply to any request. He pointed out that no guarantee can be given as to the answer in light of the possibility that the situation would have still further changed radically. He went on to say that the U.S. Government has not changed its view of the importance of Southeast Asia nor its determination to save it as long as it can be saved. He closed on the note that all this had been foreseen at Berlin; that it had required no gift of prophecy to have known as he did in February that agreement to negotiate with the Communists on Indochina would place the French on a slippery slope. Nevertheless he had acceded to Bidault's judgment at the time that in order for the Laniel Government to stay in power it had to place Indochina on the agenda for the Geneva Conference. Even the reckless use in the interval by Ho Chi Minh of his military assets was then foreseen.

The Ambassador agreed that the time was late and the situation had deteriorated.

Ambassador Bonnet seemed tired and emotionally upset.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 202d Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, June 17, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

The following were present at the 202nd meeting of the Council: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Attorney General (for Item 3); Assistant Secretary Anderson for the Secretary of Commerce (for Items 1 and 2); Assistant Secretary Siciliano for the Secretary of Labor (for Item 5); the Director, Bureau of the Budget; Assistant Attorney General Barnes (for Item 3); Assistant Secretary of Defense Hannah (for Item 5); Walter S. DeLany, Foreign Operations Administration; Assistant Secretary of the Army Milton (for Item 5); Herbert N. Blackman, Department of Commerce (for Items 1 and 2); Irving Kramer, Foreign Operations Administration (for Items 1 and 2); General Twining for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief of Naval Operations; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; the White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the chief points taken.

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4. *Five-Power Examination of the Military Situation in Southeast Asia (Including Indochina)* (NSC Action No. 1112)[2]

Before giving his report, Admiral Carney alluded to the terms of reference of the Five-Power staff conversations and his instructions from the Joint Chiefs of Staff with respect to the objectives he should pursue in the conversations. Admiral Carney next gave high praise to the participants in the conversations for their efforts to be cooperative. There was a wide range of agreement in the course of the discussions.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on June 18.

[2] For NSC Action No. 1112, see the memorandum of discussion at the 196th Meeting of the National Security Council, May 8, in volume XII. For the report of the Five-Power Military Conference, dated June 11, and related documentation, see *ibid.*

Admiral Carney then proceeded to give an oral report on the major fields explored in the course of the conversations. The first of these was an intelligence survey of the situation in Southeast Asia. Unanimous agreement was reached on all aspects of this survey except on the question of the attitude of Soviet Russia in the event that the United States and its allies became embroiled with the Chinese Communists. The British and French delegates expressed the view that in this contingency the Soviets would come to the assistance of the Chinese Communists and World War III would ensue. The U.S. position, said Admiral Carney, was that the behavior of the Russians was problematic rather than probable. The general intelligence survey was followed by a presentation by General Valluy on the situation in the Tonkin Delta.

Thirdly, said Admiral Carney, there was a report on military courses of action in Indochina, with special reference to the Tonkin Delta. Here the consensus was that if the Delta were lost to the Communists it would be extremely difficult to draw any other defense line in Indochina. The "least bad" of such possible lines was thought to be at the narrow waist of Annam, which would run roughly from Thakhek to Dong-Hoi. All of the conferees agreed on the vital importance of strengthening the internal security of the remaining Southeast Asian countries.

The fourth area of investigation dealt with the defense of Southeast Asia in the event of overt Chinese Communist aggression. It was generally agreed that the broad strategy in this contingency would be to fight as far to the north as possible. If we fail to halt the Communists in the north, the best bet was to halt them at the Kra Isthmus. It was also the unanimous opinion of the participants that if the Chinese Communists overtly aggressed and an air offensive were initiated, our side should make use of atomic weapons. Admiral Carney observed that he was surprised that this view had unanimous acceptance.

The next discussion centered on military problems which could be anticipated in the event of a cease-fire in Indochina. The conference agreed that the subject was rather academic, but such ideas as emerged were largely based on experience with the Communists in Korea.

Admiral Carney then said that these separate reports were followed by a summary and conclusions. The following were the most important: *First*, all agreed that the Tonkin Delta was the key to the strategic situation in Southeast Asia. There was no dissent from this view. *Second*, there was agreement that the French Union forces in the Delta would be subject to increasing attack this month. The French delegate had initially made plain to the others the fact that the French were resigned to defeat. Subsequently, however, he changed his view to entertain the possibility that the French Union forces could hold out for a time at least. *Third*, there was agreement that by September the Vietminh would be ready to launch a heavy coordinated attack in the Delta. If the French Union forces had not in the meantime been heavily reinforced, they would probably suffer a major defeat. Admiral Carney indicated that General Valluy had privately expressed to him the view that if the French Union forces suffered such a defeat in the Tonkin Delta, the fighting would cease everywhere else in Indochina. *Fourth*, it was agreed that if the military situation in the Delta were to be stabilized, three fresh divisions as a minimum would have to be in place before the attack began in September. Although the record does not show it, Admiral Carney indicated that the French expected these divisions to be supplied by the United States. *Fifth*, with respect to the situation if and when the Delta were lost, there was an agreement on the possibility of establishing a new defense line at the narrow waist of Annam. This would require four divisions for static defense, some of which might be supplied out of French forces extricated from the Delta. If sufficient forces could not be extricated from the Delta, the participants agreed that it would be hopeless to try to hold this new line. If an effort were made to obtain the needed forces from southern Indochina, the result would be a collapse of security in the rear of the defense line. There were insufficient forces to do both jobs. If it proved impossible to defend at the Annam waistline, it was agreed that there was no other suitable defense terrain in Thailand or southern Indochina. The next point of defense would therefore have to be the Kra peninsula.

In his comments on these conclusions, Admiral Carney indicated that there had been very little optimism as to organizing the defense of the remainder of Indochina if the Delta were lost. Very little had been said about Burma, although the British delegate, Harding, pointed out that after having quite a whirl with their newfound independence, the Burmese were beginning to sober up and once again to seek advice from the British. Harding therefore thought that the Burmese might gradually be induced to take an interest in defense arrangements in Southeast Asia.

General Valluy, said Admiral Carney, had proposed to follow up the conclusions of the report with a statement which he had composed, pleading for solidarity among the five nations participating in the conference. While Valluy's text was not accepted, a revision by Harding was. With respect to future Five-Power staff agency conversations, Admiral Carney made it clear that the United States was reserving its position for the present. We had agreed, however, to participate in an Intelligence Conference scheduled for July at Singapore. On the other hand, we had not committed ourselves to attend a meeting of the military planners of the five powers scheduled for Melbourne in September.

At the conclusion of Admiral Carney's report, the President expressed surprise at the pessimistic views as to the results of a Vietminh attack in the Delta, even though such an attack did not involve overt Chinese support. Admiral Carney could only repeat to the President that initially General Valluy had had nothing hopeful to offer with respect to this contingency, but that he did subsequently modify the view that such an attack would result in the quick collapse of the French Union forces in the Delta.

The President reiterated that this current pessimism was in marked contrast with the earlier desire of the French Union forces to confront the enemy in a pitched battle.

Mr. Cutler inquired of Admiral Carney whether the conference had discussed the question of using any ROK divisions. Admiral Carney replied that while the record contained no reference to this subject, it had in fact been discussed. The French view had been that ROK forces would not be acceptable. Secretary Dulles added the comment that as he understood it, the French were insulted at the very idea of enlisting aid from the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Allen Dulles commented briefly on the increasing rate of desertions among the Vietnamese forces. The problem of morale and the will to fight was still unsolved. In commenting on this point, Admiral Carney said that General Valluy insisted that the loss of Dien Bien Phu had radically altered the military balance in Indochina in favor of the Vietminh. This was not merely a matter of numbers, but derived from the fact that the troops lost at Dien Bien Phu constituted the flower of the French Expeditionary Corps. Also of great significance were the psychological repercussions of the defeat on the Vietnamese troops.

All this, said the President, simply went to prove that the native populations of these states regarded this whole business as a colonial war. Agreeing with the President, Secretary Dulles commented that from time to time he thought it best to let the French get out of Indochina entirely and then to try to rebuild from the foundations.

The President stated that in any event all this proved that it was impossible for the United States to intervene in Indochina and accomplish anything until the native peoples agreed on a political objective for which they were willing to fight. There was certainly no sign of this at present.

Secretary Wilson expressed great concern about the vast amount of equipment which the United States had shipped to Indochina. If the French Union forces were badly defeated, the Vietminh would get possession of much of this equipment, and as a result their army would be among the best equipped in Asia.

Governor Stassen inquired of Admiral Carney as to the real feasibility of establishing and holding at the waist-line of Annam. Could such a line be held if the Chinese Communists refrained from intervention? Admiral Carney replied that he personally was doubtful if such a line could long be maintained, even against the Vietminh alone. Secretary Dulles, however, expressed the opinion that such a line was not likely to be frontally attacked if it was manned by forces representative of the coalition. The Vietminh would prefer to use tactics of subversion rather than to attack these allied forces directly. Whether in the meantime you could succeed in building real military strength south of the line was problematic, since political factors would play an important role. Governor Stassen thought it important to emphasize that choice of a defense line at the waist of Annam would very probably obviate the likelihood of overt Chinese Communist intervention, since the Chinese Communists would have succeeded in creating a buffer state in northern Indochina.

The President observed that the worst feature of this Annam line was that it exposed Thailand and Burma to attack. Admiral Carney agreed with the President that the choice of such a line would leave the flank exposed. Governor Stassen pointed out, however, that both Thailand and Burma would be subject to a defense guaranty by the coalition powers. This should prevent a direct Communist attack on them, and, as regards internal subversion, these two countries were in better shape and were better able to resist subversion than any other area of Southeast Asia. Secretary Dulles agreed with Governor Stassen that if the allied powers could unite in defense of Southeast Asia on a line which would include Burma, Thailand, and Indochina south of the Annam waist-line, and if the powers asserted themselves to build up the armed forces of Thailand, it would perhaps be possible to establish a defense position which could withstand military assault and which would comprise an area that was economically viable. But, continued Secretary Dulles, for the United States or its allies to try to fight now in the Delta area was almost impossible, if for no other reason than that the French have no inclination to invite us in. They are desperately anxious to get themselves out of Indochina. Under these circumstances, Secretary Dulles thought it was probably best to let them quit.

At this point the President suggested that the Council discuss the next item on the agenda.

The National Security Council:

a. Noted and discussed an oral report by the Chief of Naval Operations on developments during the Five-Power examination of the military situation in Southeast Asia (including Indochina), conducted pursuant to NSC Action No. 1112.

b. Noted oral remarks by the Director of Central Intelligence regarding the situation in Indochina with particular reference to the morale of Vietnamese units.

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751G.00/6–1754 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, June 17, 1954—6 p. m.

2807. Repeated information Paris 999, Geneva 243, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Prince Buu Loc asked me to see him this morning. He made a general "tour d'horizon" and spoke with extreme candor.

Buu Loc said he was deeply concerned at fate of Tonkin delta. He said if it was decided militarily to withdraw from delta it would have very serious repercussions on Vietnam's capacity to continue war since Tonkin was manpower reserve of this country (analogous remark of General Alessandri as reported Embassy despatch 570 of June 4[1] when General observed that Viet Minh strategy was based on two essential elements, namely the human and food resources of Tonkin delta). Buu Loc went on to say if military determined certain areas in delta could not be held at least effort should be made to remove population for resettlement elsewhere. This would afford Vietnamese Army ready source of manpower although it would pose problems of great magnitude with respect to resettlement of families and to physical means of moving large number of people.

Turning to present political crisis in Vietnam, Prince said Ngo Dinh Diem had formally been offered responsibility of forming government. He had already called on Minister for Associated States Dupont and although date of his arrival here was not yet known, Buu Loc imagined that Diem would be here within week.

I took occasion to observe to Prince that Saigon was buzzing with rumors that Diem was candidate of US. I said this was news to us and although we had heard many nice things of Diem as a man of great rectitude and patriotism, my government had never in his case nor any other sought to interfere in domestic politics of Vietnam.

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[1] Despatch 570 from Saigon, June 4, reporting on the views of General Alessandri, military adviser to Bao Dai, is not printed. (751G.00/6–454)

Buu Loc expressed considerable apprehension lest Diem by his sincerity and unworldliness become dupe of "more expert people." He said frankly there was danger Diem might be used as the facade for grafters and professional corruptionists who would go on their way while Diem naively supposed that corruption in this country had been terminated with his elevation to office. I observed (having in mind Geneva telegram Secto 437, repeated Paris 430, Saigon 164)[2] that security forces of Vietnam were now made up of alumni from the prison island of Poulo Condore and I wondered if they would be chosen instrument for campaign of official austerity and honesty, of pitiless severity against past and present governmental grafters.

The Prince then launched into vigorous denunciation of Nguyen De. He said Nguyen De was cause of most of Vietnam's present internal political misfortunes. He said, "Nguyen De is like a man who can't make love, but doesn't want anyone else to". He said Nguyen De knew that he himself could never be Prime Minister, but he determined to frustrate any other occupant of that office. Although Buu Loc professed that he had openly reproached Bao Dai at impossibility of conducting affairs of state so long as Nguyen De was "the real government of Vietnam", fact that Buu Loc is now on his way out would indicate that Nguyen De still has upper hand. Buu Loc agreed in my assessment that Tam had made a serious practical blunder when, in attacking Nguyen De, he likewise attacked Bao Dai. This forced Nguyen De once more back into arms of Bao Dai, whereas if Tam had played his cards more cleverly he might indeed have taken successful aim at Nguyen De.

The Prince was enigmatic re possibility that Bao Dai would return to Vietnam. He said with great earnestness, however, that if Ngo Dinh Diem or any other Prime Minister were to succeed in his task he would require full powers from Bao Dai and thus be able to make decisions on the spot. He said it was impossible to conduct government as at present by referring administrative decrees back to Cannes for signature.

Buu Loc said of his own plans that he intends to return to Paris as High Commissioner and eventual Ambassador. He said diplomatic front in France had much deteriorated and he felt he could be of more use to Vietnam now in trying to repair bridges near the Seine. Afterwards, if it was agreeable to US Government, he hoped to make a visit to US and would eventually like to be Ambassador in Washington. Possibly later on, "after I have gained more experience", he would consider returning to tasks of government in Vietnam.

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[2] For text of Secto 437 from Geneva, June 14, summarizing a conversation between Nguyen Dac Khe of the Vietnamese Delegation and Heath and Bonsal of the U.S. Delegation, see vol. XVI, p. 1134.

Buu Loc said that he would recommend to his successor advisability of exchanging diplomatic representation with Japan and other two Associated States. He was not quite sure whether it would be useful at this juncture for Vietnam to enter into formal relations with Chinese Government on Formosa.

Buu Loc concluded interview by saying Communists in Asia had successfully followed consistent policy of concentrating on one or two champions such as Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh. Their propaganda had been unremitting and undivided, whereas democratic powers seemed to be all over lot, first in favor of one, and then another, protagonist. He thought French were precluded by reason of long cherished animosities from building up any one national leader here. US, which had unrivaled means of mass media and of propaganda at its disposal could, if it so wished, popularize Vietnamese national figure who would serve our common cause. He mentioned such names as Quat, Tri, Tam, and Huu. I said if he was not careful we might decide on himself and put him back to work.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/6–1854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, June 18, 1954—1 p. m.

4914. Dept limit distribution. Geneva eyes only Under Secretary. I delivered President's letter personally to Coty at 12:15 today.[1] Coty was most pleased with the contents of the letter and said it had come at a most opportune time. He asked me to thank the President and said he would send him a personal answer very promptly.

Coty then said that it was true that there had been a certain amount of misunderstanding between France and the U.S. regarding Indochina, but that he wanted to make it clear that he fully realized that France bore a full share of responsibility for any such misunderstanding.

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[1] The letter from President Eisenhower to President Coty, dated June 16 and released June 18, began as follows: "I write to assure you that in these troubled days my country remains warm in its sympathy and staunch in its friendship for your country." With specific reference to Indochina, the President stated: "In Indochina our nation has long shown its deep concern by heavy financial and material aid which continues. The proposals for a united defense which we submitted to Monsieur Laniel represented on our part a momentous and grave decision. Nothing has happened here to change the attitude thus expressed, even though the lapse of time and the events which have come to pass have, of course, created a new situation. But I assure you that we shall be ready in the same spirit to open new discussions as the forthcoming French Government may deem it opportune." For the full text of President Eisenhower's letter and the reply by President Coty of June 23, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pp. 583–584.

He then spoke highly of Mendes-France [2] and said that it should be possible to obtain clear cut statements of position from him, which would be helpful in dispelling misunderstanding. He particularly praised Mendes-France's categoric refusal to accept Communist support for his investiture and said that it was the strong position that Mendes-France had taken on this subject, applauded by all anti-Communist parties in the National Assembly, which had given the necessary impetus to his candidacy to assure his investiture.

Regarding publication of the letter, Coty felt that it would be most helpful to have it publicized but said that he would like to discuss it with Mendes-France this afternoon, after which he would let us have his definite feelings on the matter. I told him that when I received his views I would communicate promptly with Washington and get the views of my government regarding publication.

I personally feel that the letter is excellent and that it would be helpful to have it publicized. I hope that arrangements can be made for its immediate release should Coty so desire.

DILLON

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[2] On June 17, Pierre Mendès-France was elected Premier of France by the National Assembly. The vote was 419 to 47 with a large number of abstentions. In his statement of policy delivered prior to the vote, Mendès-France undertook to resign if he were unable to obtain a cease-fire in Indochina on reasonable terms by July 20. For the record of his speech, see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats*, pp. 2992–2994. For an English translation of the pertinent part, see Cameron, *Viet-Nam Crisis*, vol. I, pp. 275–277.

751J.00/6–1954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, June 19, 1954—2 p. m.

2830. Repeated information Paris 1009, Bangkok 200, Geneva 250, Hanoi and Vientiane unnumbered. Following from Rives on consultation Saigon re possible military and political developments Laos:

1. Military situation north Laos will remain stationary and that in south favorable if no more French troops withdrawn.

However, position liable change rapidly in event Tonkin delta lost. This would release at least five Viet Minh divisions any one of which would suffice conquest Laos at least as far south as Thakhek.

2. Political scene outwardly quiet though could also change over night. Prime Minister expects leave for Paris economic talks prior end June. King and Crown Prince due leave for France end June and early July (King going for health).

These departures leave Laos without sole effective leader at what might be crucial period. Rives does not feel departures King and Crown Prince have special significance though that of Prime Minister believed unfortunate in view present absence at Geneva of Foreign Minister, second most effective member government.

3. From recent statements by Lao Prime Minister it appears he is tired of job and ready be replaced. Desires post at Paris or Washington (this remarkably similar desires Buu Loc).

4. Though Katay Sasorith, former Finance Minister and principal opponent Prime Minister from south, has lost ground, Prince Boun Oum of south Laos potential troublemaker. Latter dislikes Crown Prince, resentful of treatment since giving up claim to Lao throne, and presently very active with militia south Laos. According French source, he could try seize power but this deemed doubtful and with slight chance success.

5. From all Legation contacts comes feeling that return Petsarath, half brother Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and now voluntary exile Thailand, would be welcome if he agreed behave and act for good of Laos, instead of fight ruling family. Could easily become Prime Minister with greater popular support than accorded Souvanna Phouma.

6. French high representative has stated French Forces Laos would not interfere government change if desire obviously national. However, if coup attempted by small clique or Viet Minh, French Union troops would take action protect present government.

Though possible events listed above of importance Laos and Southeast Asia, it must be noted only relatively minute portion Lao population aware of and interested in developments. Apathy is general rule save among few government leaders who themselves are dependent on and desirous of aid and advice France and US.

McClintock

751G.00/6–2054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, June 20, 1954—noon.

2844. Sent Paris 1011, Geneva 252; repeated information Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Assistant Air Attaché Lansdale and Embassy officer called June 15 on Colonel Jean Leroy, Chief of now defunct UMDC (Catholic militia formerly operating principally in Ben Tre province of south Vietnam), at Saigon headquarters. Establishment and few troops visible made favorable impression.

Leroy, recently returned from year's study at one of French military schools, is temporarily without precise job, but is performing special missions for Vietnamese General Staff and Minister National Defense. He had just completed five-day inspection tour of security situation in five "old provinces" south Vietnam, once considered surest in area, for Quat.

Leroy permitted on-the-spot reading of secret report to Quat, in which he said security in once safe provinces had deteriorated dangerously within last six months, and that if immediate remedial action not taken, all would be lost in two or three months. Among reasons given for grave state of affairs were: Auto defense units in villages were badly paid, clothed, armed, fed, and often wholesale withdrawal of arms would follow desertion of handful men, thus leaving village without protection; Vietnamese Army concerned much more with tailoring of uniform and unearned decorations than with primary purpose of combatting Communist enemy; provincial departments of government were either corrupt or unable understand people's need of psychological support and spiritual leadership; top government officials ostentatiously traveled about in large cars, ignoring poverty of masses, which were therefore forced to look with greater respect on austere Viet Minh; youth sought some sort of ideal for which to fight, but none was forthcoming from hidebound, incomprehensive mandarins. One of most striking observations was made in connection statement on disarming whole villages as penalty for one or two desertions, practice which Leroy declared drove people to Viet Minh, "to whom human life not so cheap".

Leroy concluded summary current situation with declaration that people had not yet chosen between Viet Minh and National Government, but that if urgent steps not taken, they would surely soon opt for Communists.

In listing measures recommended for improving situation, Leroy concentrated on steps designed to gain sympathy and support of masses, chief among them being adequate arming and training of village auto defense units. These would be backed up by regional and provincial troops, and all forces would receive thorough police indoctrination. For exterminating or chasing out three Viet Minh regular battalions operating in "old provinces," Leroy estimated five regular National Army battalions would be needed for six months. In social action field, Leroy mentioned pensions for widowed troopers, construction of schools and hospitals.

Catholic militia leader refused lend copy above report, but volunteered prepare special study for General O'Daniel, if possible before meeting scheduled evening June 21 with O'Daniel, Lansdale, and myself.

During subsequent discussion, Leroy claimed have 30,000 troops, despite fact UMDC officially disbanded last year. He also declared General Hinh had asked him train three divisions, which Leroy would be willing do on condition he be permitted select officers from among own men and from "good" elements in Vietnamese National Army. He himself would never serve in National Army, especially not under "Little Aviator" Yinm [*Hinh*] but nonetheless was prepared train and turn over troops. Leroy went on to boast that he could recruit 100,000 men in two weeks, but was afraid that if he did so, nearly entire National Army would desert to him. He also claimed Hoa Hao General Soai, Cao Dai, and Binh Xuyen were ready to place their men under his leadership. This seems incredible in land divided to point of disintegration, but is no more an orientalism than many other developments in Vietnam.

Interesting point made by Leroy was that US owed it to itself to back vigorous, clean anti-Communist elements here inasmuch as its prestige had gravely suffered in Asiatic eyes through support of corrupt Chiang group in China, stalemate equivalent to defeat in Korea, Viet Minh trouncing of US-backed French at Dien Bien Phu, and policy of assisting graft ridden Bao Dai Government.

McClintock

751G.00/6–2054 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET HANOI, June 20, 1954—3 p. m.

750. Repeated information Saigon 685, Paris 332. Tri sent me copy of secret letter to Buu Loc dated June 19 in which he strongly urged latter obtain solemn assurances from French re their intentions defend delta. At very least, he felt Vietnamese Government could obtain formal French commitment not only to hold firm until Vietnamese army is in position relieve French Union Forces but also to inform Vietnamese Government in advance of withdrawals which should no longer be decided unilaterally and secretly by French High Command.

Governor also strongly suggested approach to United States Government which would distinguish between request for United States intervention in Vietnam and United States military assistance. According Tri, request for United States armed intervention would have chance of being accepted only in extreme case massive and open Chinese–Soviet participation present conflict. Tri felt, however, that assurances to this effect, if given now, would have great morale value.

He then pointed out it would be more timely and more practicable to request an increase and acceleration of United States military aid both in form of technical training and supply of arms, munitions and equipment. He emphasized strongly that this aid was needed immediately and in large quantities.

Cameron

751G.00/6-2054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, June 20, 1954—10 p. m.

4944. Repeated information London 1193, Geneva 428. The Under Secretary met for an hour and a quarter with Mendes-France this afternoon at the Quai d'Orsay.[1] At Mendes' request, only Under Secretary and Dillon were present for the first 15 minutes. Thereafter, Robertson, Parodi, Chauvel, Ely and La Chambre (new Minister for Associated States) joined the meeting. Subject matter at both meetings was identical and is reported herewith as one meeting. Mendes opened by reminding General Smith of his conversation with him in Washington last September where he had pointed out the great importance to France of settling the war in Indochina. Since then the situation had considerably deteriorated with the result that it was now essential to make every effort to end the war promptly. This Mendes hoped, would give the necessary impetus to a revivification of the spirit of France. If he was successful in achieving peace in Indochina, Mendes hoped that he could overcome the deep differences that divided the French people and put France back on the track as a great power. However, Mendes said several times that he would not in any event accept a peace in Indochina that was a surrender to the Viet Minh and that he would not even accept a disguised capitulation. The settlement to be reached would have to be a fair one, he said.

Mendes then said that he had just been informed this morning that Chou En-lai wished him to come to Geneva for a meeting. Mendes said that in view of the fact that Eden and the Under Secretary had left Geneva, he would in no event go there himself at this time. However, he did not feel that he could turn down Chou En-lai's invitation flatly, and so he said he was considering making a counterproposal that Chou En-lai visit him in Paris. The Under Secretary said that he felt that such a visit would have very bad repercussions in certain quarters of American opinion who would take it to mean *de facto* recognition of Communist China by France. Mendes then said that Eden had heartily welcomed the idea and had asked him to tell the Under Secretary that Eden was in favor of such a visit. After further discussion in which the possibility of the French Communists making use of such a visit for propaganda purposes was mentioned, which Mendes said would be most undesirable, the idea was broached of having the meeting in a small town somewhere in eastern France part way between Paris and Geneva. The subject was dropped with Mendes saying he felt it would be definitely better to have the meeting somewhere outside of Paris.

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[1] Under Secretary Smith left Geneva on June 20, stopping at Paris before returning to Washington.

The Under Secretary then described to Mendes in some detail his conversation of Friday night with Molotov[2] and he emphasized that he had told Molotov that the United States would take a very grave view of any attempt by the Communist side to obtain more than they were entitled to and, in particular, to in any way humiliate our ally France whom we continued to fully support.

The Under Secretary then went on to mention the importance of the Thailand appeal to the United Nations. Mendes had only heard of the appeal in very general terms and clearly did not know what a peace observation committee was or anything about the substance of this problem. Chauvel said that he understood that the United States wished the General Assembly to take the matter up on the 15th of July, but that Eden had said the United Kingdom preferred the 20th of July, in view of Mendes-France's deadline for peace in Indochina. Under Secretary observed that he did not see why this deadline should have any effect on Thailand and Chauvel agreed and said that he was only reporting the British position.

The Under Secretary then emphasized the importance of the French delegation in Geneva keeping in touch with our delegation regarding any negotiations with the Viet Minh so that we would not be suddenly faced with a solution from which we would have to publicly disassociate ourselves. The Under Secretary said that if such a solution was going to be reached eventually, it would be better for us to know it soon so that we could disassociate ourselves from the negotiations gradually and cushion what might otherwise be a serious shock to Franco-American relations. Mendes thanked the Under Secretary very much for this statement and said that he was glad to know the United States position. He stated that the French delegation in Geneva would be instructed to keep in close touch with the United States delegation.

Mendes apeared to have already acquired a good grasp of the negotiations at Geneva and at one point he surprised Chauvel by his knowledge of the secret negotiations with the Viet Minh which Chauvel had obviously not fully reported to him. Mendes had obtained his information directly from Colonel Brebisson.

Mendes made only one request. He said that if and when any agreement was reached with the Viet Minh, he expected to have considerable difficulty with the new Vietnamese Government. He said that Diem was a fanatic much like Syngman Rhee and that while it would have been most helpful to have had him in power two or three years ago, it would be most unfortunate if he seriously obstructed the negotiations at the present time. He said that the Vietnam representatives would undoubtedly place great weight on any advice they might get from the United States and he hoped that the United States would be able to help France by discreetly letting the Vietnamese representatives know that they would be wise to accept the French agreement with the Viet Minh as the best agreement obtainable. Mendes emphasized this subject several times and this was clearly the one important request he had to make. The Under Secretary did not commit himself in any way on this subject.

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[2] The conversation under reference of June 18 was summarized in telegram Dulte 202 from Geneva, June 19; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 1189.

Finally, Mendes said that he hoped that if an agreement was reached by the technical committees in the near future, the Ministers would be willing to return to Geneva before July 12. He said that Eden had indicated willingness to return earlier provided a satisfactory arrangement was reached. The Under Secretary responded that we considered the July 12th date to be an outside date and we very much hoped that the technical committees would reach an agreement prior to that date. This completed the Indochina phase of the discussions.

Dillon

751G.00/6-2154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL Paris, June 21, 1954—8 p. m.

4978. Sent Saigon 627, repeated information Geneva unnumbered. Ambassador Heath[1] had interview this morning with Ngo Dinh Diem, new Vietnamese Prime Minister, who was accompanied by brother Ngo Dinh Luyen, now described as Ambassador-at-Large of Vietnam.

Diem concerned with Mendes-France's policy on Indochina. Afraid that promise of cease-fire by July 20 indicated increased chances for settlement favorable to Vietminh. Diem's conversations to date with Mendes had not been reassuring. Diem to see him once more before leaving for Saigon June 23.

Diem was sure he would accomplish his objectives in Vietnam ("I am best known figure in Vietnam after Ho Chi Minh") but only if granted full powers by the French, similar to those he had already been granted by Bao Dai, and if French provided cover in maintaining present positions at least until autumn. When it was pointed out that new treaty relationship and conventions give powers, Diem replied would be some time before conventions were finally approved. We stated this contrary to previous understanding and asked what provision required further negotiation. He replied Vietnamese wanted French to cede control of bank issue and exchange control office

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[1] Ambassador Heath was in Paris, having served with the U.S. Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

(Office des Changes). Diem's appreciation functions these two organizations so lacking that we thought it useless to pursue question, simply reiterating desirability signing conventions as soon as possible.

We pressed for explanation why Bao Dai did not stay in Geneva, let alone return to Vietnam. In reply received series empty excuses including astonishing statement Bao Dai could not afford to live in a hotel at Geneva, it being more economical stay villa at Cannes. Later developed that in reality Diem and Luyen did not want Bao Dai back in Vietnam for two reasons: (1) they think he might be assassinated; and (2) because they thought his presence in Indochina and intriguing which would result would hamper their efforts establish and run govt. In this regard Diem reported he had been given full powers by Bao Dai and would operate without handicap of predecessors of having contend with imperial cabinet.

Both men regretted French military action of withdrawing forces from pacified areas in order to divert them to the defense of the delta. In this regard they mentioned Bui Chu and Phat Diem, Catholic-populated regions, but no others.

Luyen replied that Bao Dai was still awaiting answers questions put to Under Secretary at Geneva. Heath referred them to the Secretary's June 11 Los Angeles speech setting forth conditions under which US could consider intervening in Indochina. Diem concerned with Mendes-France's promise achieve cease-fire by July 20, stating that time of 3 or 4 months would be required before his govt could show results. Heath emphasized need Diem achieve results soonest.

Diem promised give Embassy results second interview with Mendes-France before departing Saigon. Heath told him of his own imminent return Saigon and intention continue work close cooperation with Diem Govt as he had with predecessors.

Heath made no effort to see Bao Dai who will presumably be in Paris for a few days.

DILLON

Editorial Note

A message from British Prime Minister Churchill to President Eisenhower, received in Washington on June 21, 1954, read in part as follows:

> "My dear friend;
>
> "I have always thought that if the French meant to fight for their Empire in Indo-China instead of clearing out as we did of our far greater inheritance in India, they should at least have introduced two years' service which would have made it possible for them to use the military power of their nation. They did not do this but fought on for eight years with untrustworthy local troops, with French cadre ele-

ments important to the structure of their home army and with the Foreign Legion, a very large proportion of whom were Germans. The result has thus been inevitable and personally I think Mendes-France, whom I do not know, has made up his mind to clear out on the best terms available. If that is so, I think he is right.

"I have thought continually about what we ought to do in the circumstances. Here it is. There is all the more need to discuss ways and means of establishing a firm front against Communism in the Pacific sphere. We should certainly have a S.E.A.T.O., corresponding to N.A.T.O. in the Atlantic and European sphere. In this it is important to have the support of the Asian countries. This raises the question of timing in relation to Geneva.

"In no foreseeable circumstances, except possibly a local rescue, could British troops be used in Indo-China, and if we were asked our opinion we should advise against United States local intervention except for rescue." (751G.00/6-2154)

For the full text of the message, which dealt with a variety of issues, see volume VI.

751G.00/6-2254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, June 22, 1954—7 p. m.

2873. Repeated information Paris 1021, Geneva 259, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Governor Tri of North Vietnam came in to see me this morning. He said he had come down from Hanoi at Prince Buu Loc's request to discuss current situation and had informed Buu Loc that once there were a Vietnamese Government to which he could address his resignation he would do so.

Tri said he had asked General Ely and General Salan for a frank statement of French military intentions so far as they related to Tonkin but had received series of shoulder shrugs and evasive answers. He said in particular it was morally wrong for French High Command so to restrict defense perimeter in Delta as to expose thousands of loyal inhabitants to Viet Minh reprisals. He was likewise fully aware of vindictive desire of General Navarre, by handing southeast quadrant of Delta defense over to relatively green national army forces, thus to insure that they would receive a bloody defeat at hands of veteran Viet Minh divisions. He had, however, at least for time being, secured agreement of Ely and Cogny not to force this split up of military responsibility in Delta. Nevertheless, Tri was fearful that without proper warning French generals would commence further retraction of their defense perimeter and final evacuation to Haiphong without facilities being offered for evacuation of that portion of Tonkin population which are anti-Viet Minh and would be willing to risk rigors of starting a new life elsewhere, presumably to south Vietnam.

Tri mentioned, as had Prince Buu Loc (Embtel 2807),[1] difficulty of evacuating sizeable element of Tonkin population. I have almost certain hunch that if this crisis arises we will receive a last-minute appeal either from Tri directly or officially from Vietnamese Government for US aid in a Dunkirk-type sea lift operation. It would be helpful to have guidance from Department and our defense authorities as to attitude US might adopt in case of such an appeal.

Tri fully understood position of US and his indignation was centered on French egoism and faint-heartedness. He said that High Command here, apparently reflecting jitters in Paris, had become so demoralized by fall of Dien Bien Phu that it had no concept of fighting for an eventual victory, although in terms of men and fire-power French Union command in Tonkin could, if it had any desire to, most certainly hold the Delta.

Tri seemed, however, reconciled to eventual loss of Tonkin through partition by negotiation. He said explicitly he was convinced that French without consultation with Vietnamese were already in contact with Viet Minh with a view to cease fire and armistice terms.

McClintock

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[1] Dated June 17, p. 1718.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 295

Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler)[1]

TOP SECRET [Washington, June 23, 1954.]

Outline of General Smith's Remarks to the President and Bipartisan Congressional Group,[2] 8:30 a. m., June 23, 1954

1. General Smith spoke first of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference, in which the US was as one of the belligerents a principal. He said that the US had maintained its principal positions:

1. The authority of the UN.
2. Good relations with the ROK.

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[1] The source text was transmitted by Bowie to Under Secretary Smith with a note of June 23 which read as follows: "General Cutler asked me to give you a copy of the attached outline that he prepared of your remarks on the Geneva Conference to the President and the Congressional group."

[2] The President's appointment book indicates that 13 Senators and 17 Representatives, including the Congressional leadership of both parties, were present at this meeting. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments")

3. Good relations with the other UN nations participating in Korea.
4. Demonstration that the failure to reach agreement was the fault of the Soviets.

He expected that the US would report to the UN, and that the existing situation would continue until some further conferences were held.

2. The US position toward the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference, which was still going on, was different, for the US was not a belligerent or a principal, and therefore had to remain aloof and be somewhat restrained. He said that Dulles a long time ago had told Bidault that if Indochina were put on the Geneva agenda, violent communist fighting would break out in Indochina. This had happened. He said that the UK had been anxious to play a major role at Geneva as a peace maker, carrying the Asian members of the Commonwealth along, but not involving commitment of British forces.

a. He added that during the Geneva Conference, the decline in morale and effectiveness of the Vietnamese army and the fall of the Laniel Government in France had compelled the US to re-evaluate its position.

b. The original US position was that enemy forces should be evacuated from Laos and Cambodia, because they had been invaded and should be treated differently from Vietnam, which was in a state of civil war; that whatever fair settlement was arrived at for Vietnam, we wanted an impartial and effective International Supervisory Commission, and not one with two built-in Communist vetos. These positions became the central issues of the Indochina phase. On the latter issue, when the British finally proposed the International Advisory Commission, to be composed of the Colombo Powers, and the Soviets rejected this proposal, the Soviets incurred Asian ill-will.

c. The Indochina phase developed in three installments. During the first installment, Eden hoped for a compromise. Bidault took a strong and courageous stand of no compromise of matters of principle, and the Communists were inflexible and calm. The second installment began on May 29, when the French began direct talks with the Viet Minh as to cease-fire and withdrawal areas. This phase was dominated by sharp Communist attacks against the Laniel Government. The third installment followed the fall of the Laniel Government, an indication by the UK that the Conference had failed, and a new tactic by the Communists of apparent conciliation and minor shifts from inflexible positions (such as an indication that they would treat Cambodia differently; that Burma or Indonesia might be a 5th member of the International Supervisory Commission; that they would agree to a partition of Vietnam).

d. The US throughout these developments continued to hold to its basic views, but as the US is not a principal or a belligerent, it has not the power to determine the decision.

e. General Smith prophesied that a continuance of French political weakness, a continuance of UK desire to avoid conflict in the Far East, a continuance of the Communist firmness of position, and a belief that the Communists would probably move to the following position, which the French, UK, and Associated States would accept:

1. A partition of Vietnam, or some intermediate step looking toward partition.
2. Communist control of about one-half to one-third of Laos.
3. No Communist control in Cambodia.
4. An ineffective International Supervisory Commission.
5. The arrangement to be subject to revision in the future at such time as the Communists might decide.

3. General Smith thought that Australia was now really concerned, New Zealand somewhat less concerned, and Canada still thought some solution would be possible through discussion. He felt there were changes also in the point of view of the UK, Burma, and to some extent in India. He felt there would be a greater willingness now to move to a regional grouping in Southeast Asia. If we would have been able to draw the line at a different place. If the US had been able to make its views prevail three months ago when it initiated the idea of a regional grouping. He pointed out that India felt that when Viet Minh invaded Cambodia and Laos, they had done more than cross a geographic line, because Cambodia and Laos were culturally and ethnically more like India.

a. Chou En-lai had told Eden privately that he recognized the difference between Laos and Cambodia on the one hand and Vietnam, on the other hand. He did not want American bases in Laos and Cambodia. General Smith thought that if a free election were held today in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh would get 80% of the votes, as Bao Dai was corrupt and the French still continue to impose colonialism. Chou indicated that the Viet Minh were entitled to all of the Tonkin Delta, and if they got it, they would be liberal about the south of Indochina. What Chou really wanted was to have the Geneva Powers guarantee three little buffer countries to the south of the Tonkin Delta.

4. Dulles said that he felt there were some redeeming features coming out of the Geneva Conference. Many more countries were now saying that the original proposal of the US for a regional grouping, made in March, had been sound. It was unfortunate that it took so long to educate these other countries for the need of action. In the second place, France now had a Government responsive to the people, whereas the Laniel Government had been really fictional (although on the US side). Because the French position in Indochina was confused and unpopular, the US had never wanted to support it unless it became purified. Dulles felt that it should soon be possible to salvage something from Southeast Asia, free of the taint of French colonialism, with the support of Burma and other Asian States, and with probably the benevolent neutrality of India which would be a strong factor in influencing UK action and this something could be guaranteed by a

regional grouping which would include the US. In losing the Tonkin Delta, the US had not lost assets valuable to her, for the rice for Japan comes from southern Indochina. Dulles said there would be two problems:

a. The establishment of a military line which could not be crossed by the enemy, and
b. prevention of internal and creeping subversion.

Dulles feared the latter problem more than the former. To meet it, he said it would be necessary to build up indigenous forces, and to give some economic aid. For that reason, we would need the unexpended balance of 800 million provided for Indochina, with more flexibility in its use. General Smith added that the real purpose of the Navarre Plan had been to build up indigenous military strength, and that the purpose would continue under the regional grouping.

He also pointed out that this would be a very poor time for Congress to refuse to appropriate further funds for India, just as India was beginning to come in our direction.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 322

Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Smith) to the Secretary of State

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 23, 1954.

The question of our present or eventual disassociation from Geneva Conference decisions and the reduction of our participation to a quasi-advisory or observer capacity, raises some very important policy considerations in addition to the very cogent point you brought up yesterday. I think the following are worth some thought.

Presumably, any settlement reached at Geneva will establish a new balance between Communist power of aggression and free world power of resistance. I take it that it is the objective of U.S. foreign policy to make that equilibrium as favorable as possible to our side, to minimize the possibility of further defeats in this area, and to localize the present one as far as possible.

Whatever settlement comes out of the Conference, it will reflect the inability of our side, notably France, Viet Nam, and the U.S., to reach an acceptable basis for continuing the fight to hold the Tonkin Delta against a Communist advance. Do we guarantee that settlement, or do we disassociate ourselves from it? If the settlement, an unpalatable reflection of unpalatable facts, is one which we would consider not only unsatisfactory but about which we would be prepared to do something practical and remedial, then we should not become associated with it.

If it were possible for us, either in association with others or alone, to act quickly and effectively, we would wish to avoid any restriction on our freedom of action.

But if, as now appears probable, we will have no choice other than reluctantly to accept, whether by association or otherwise, the general results of the military defeat which is the dominant theme of the present phase of the Conference, then it may be that it should be our endeavor, at least from a long-term foreign policy point of view, not only to obtain through diplomatic united action as good a settlement as possible, but also to see to it, by participation in the guaranteeing of the settlement, that the other side is not tempted by the weakness and disunity of the opposition to violate the settlement reached. There will remain, after this Conference, important military and political assets in all three countries of Indochina which it will be to our interest actively to preserve.

I realize fully the considerations which make our association with the current weakness of the Franco–Viet Namese military and political position undesirable. However, I cannot escape the feeling that for us to disassociate ourselves from the harsh reality to which our friends are bowing would accelerate Communist momentum in Southeast Asia, decrease the prestige of the U.S. as a realistic, responsible and reliable ally in the long period of struggle ahead, and thus possibly discredit or weaken our capacity to conduct U.S. foreign policy.

WBS

751G.00/6–2454 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, June 24, 1954—4 p. m.

2887. Sent Moscow 9, repeated information Paris 1024, Geneva 261, London 75, Hanoi, Bangkok, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. Following is country team message concurred in by O'Daniel for MAAG, Everett for USOM, Hellyer for USIA . . .:

With the Geneva Conference going into estivation for three weeks and Mendes-France Government on point of determining conditions under which France would accept a cease-fire in Indochina during next four weeks, it seems a suitable occasion for some stock-taking on our part similar to that which was attempted in Embtel 2256, May 20 last year.[2]

Two interacting events—Geneva Conference and Dien Bien Phu—have served to bring cause of Western Powers in Southeast Asia to a perilously low ebb. Last autumn General Navarre for strategic reasons set up what he thought would be a man trap in Dien Bien Phu but ignored possibility that enemy might be able for first time in Indochina war to make effective use of artillery.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in five parts.

[2] *Ante*, p. 571.

Based on estimate that military situation in Indochina was at least in fair balance, that "Navarre plan" would produce its intended commitment, and that in fact Dien Bien Phu could be held against any attack, Berlin Conference gave rise to Geneva conference on assumption of Western Powers that at latter meeting Foreign Minister Bidault of France would be negotiating from a position of strength. It is important to note that none of the Associated States was consulted prior to decisions either to establish Dien Bien Phu or to hold a Geneva conference.

Announcement of impending Geneva conference served as a catalyst on Viet Minh and Chinese Communists side. It was determined by their high command at all costs to take Dien Bien Phu as this condition precedent for Bidault's negotiations at Geneva would be destroyed. Backed by vastly increased Chinese supply, and by exceedingly able tactical use of artillery and sapping techniques and with fanatic disregard of casualties, General Giap took Dien Bien Phu on May 7. His losses, though great (possibly 20,000 men) were not much in excess of French losses in casualties and prisoners (18,000). In addition to psychological defeat of French Union forces which in effect made Dien Bien Phu Stalingrad of Indochina war, enemy received considerable matériel booty from his victory. General Salan, present acting Commander-in-Chief, Indochina, informed me on June 21 that he thought enough equipment fell into enemy hands to outfit at least two Viet Minh divisions.

Impact of Dien Bien Phu was not limited to negotiations at Geneva. French public at least insofar as it is represented by its Parliamentarians demanded that heads should roll. Generals Ely and Salan were sent post-haste to Indochina to make a military assessment of situation and their assessment was promptly leaked to a Parisian newspaper by a member of Laniel Cabinet, Minister for Associated States, Marc Jacquet, who was forced to resign in consequence. In quick succession General Navarre, General Lauzin, General Bodet and Commissioner General DeJean were relieved of their posts and a new team made up of Generals Ely and Salan was brought to the scene.

Before his relief Navarre had consistently maintained that it was beyond capacity of Franco–Vietnamese forces successfully to continue war later than October 1 this year without "internationalization", by which he meant US military intervention. In this assessment he was supported by General Ely. Furthermore, although balance of military force in Tonkin was approximately same on either side with a marked superiority in fire power, both air and artillery, on French side, it was conclusion of General Ely and of Commander in north, General Cogny, that it would be difficult and probably impossible to hold capital of Tonkin, Hanoi, against a determined Viet Minh attack. Preparations for evacuation of Hanoi have gone on apace and it is probable that French High Command in Indochina, unless this war is internationalized by early autumn, will seek to withdraw Expeditionary Corps from Tonkin, evacuating from Haiphong defense perimeter. It will then become a political decision whether this force will be redeployed to defend remainder of Vietnam south of Red River delta or whether it will be embarked for transit back to France. Ely told me June 15 it would stay and fight, presumably in Central Annam and Cochin China.

One [*None*] of Secretary Dulles' conditions for US intervention in war in Indochina as publicly set out in his Los Angeles speech has yet been met. There has been no official appeal from three Indochinese states for US intervention; independence of two of the Indochinese states (Vietnam and Cambodia) has not yet been granted; interest of United Nations in war in Indochina has not thus far become officially manifest; there has been no concert among interested powers for collective intervention in the war; and with advent in power of Mendes-France government, dedicated to proposition of immediate cease-fire, there is no evidence that France intends to continue war to victory.

Sharp questions, however, will very presently be raised. If Mendes-France government agrees to cease-fire it probably, according to recent telegrams received from Geneva, will seek an armistice on basis of partition, leaving Tonkin delta to Viet Minh and maintaining a truncated Vietnam at some point, presumably below eighteenth parallel of latitude. However, it is possible that Communist side, which is fully aware of weaknesses on Western side, may at conference table insist on a cease-fire which would maintain Viet Minh ascendancy throughout all Vietnam or, failing that, that armed forces of General Giap might attempt to take delta and swiftly redeploy to take central Annam and Cochin China as well, where best areas are already penetrated by Viet Minh irregular forces.

Since, however, Viet Minh can by cold war techniques easily take over remainder of Vietnam once their capital and war base is established at Hanoi, in same fashion that Czechoslovakia was taken over once Sudetenland was given away at Munich, it is probable that a cease-fire will be arranged on the "honorable" terms that French expeditionary force will be peaceably allowed to evacuate Tonkin with its arms and equipment, but on further condition that this expeditionary force not disembark at any point in Indochina and that it return forthwith to France. This will leave central and southern portion of Indochina in a seriously weakened state. At this point it is probable that direct appeals will be made to US: (*a*) from the emperor in absentia, Bao Dai, who will not move closer to the front than his redoubt at Cannes; and (*b*) from local leaders such as Prime Minister Designate, Ngo Dinh Diem; chief of staff of Vietnamese armed forces, General Hinh; and Minister for National Defense, Dr. Quat. US will then have to determine what sort of answer is to be given to these appeals, having in mind military situation and effect of a negative or affirmative answer on not only military and political posture of Indochina, but likewise on opinion of Asia in general.

Department's hopes that Bao Dai would prove himself at long last a leader have met with frustration. Suggestion advanced in Tedul 110 May 22, repeated Paris 4225, Saigon 2385,[3] that Bao Dai might appoint a consultative or even constituent assembly was answered by Bao Dai's communiqué set out Paris telegram 4907 sent Department, repeated Saigon 616, Geneva 413,[4] indicating that he would under [no] circumstances grant a constitution at present time. Furthermore, it has proved impossible for Vietnamese Governments to administer in Vietnam without reference to Bao Dai in Cannes, and most recent suggestion of Prince Buu Loc (Embtel 2807, repeated Paris 999, Geneva 243)[5] that future prime ministers be given full powers by His Majesty was answered in the same communiqué by a statement that all powers would be kept in hands of absentee emperor. In consequence, US in formulating its attitude toward an appeal by Bao Dai or a Vietnamese Government functioning in his name, must keep in mind fact that Bao Dai is not champion of his people nor a ruler with sufficient courage to share their fate. Department will likewise keep in mind Bao Dai and his grand vizier, Nguyen De, have by decree handed over security services of Vietnam to a band of gangsters and that public corruption in Vietnam has reached a point of unparalleled magnitude and public disgrace. For US to back such a monarch and such a government against tide of Vietnamese public opinion would in my judgment not only be foolish from a policy point of view, but likewise immoral.

Question then arises: Should US give assistance to a new regime in what is left of Vietnam which presumably would be in form of an Annamese/Cochin Chinese republic? It is possible, given pressure of Communist advance on northern frontier, that such a republic could be quickly formed and would receive considerable popular support. Irrespective, however, of whatever form the Vietnamese state may take, it is unanimously agreed here that such state must depend for its survival upon a well-trained, cohesive national army capable of sustained operations in mass. This force will be required regardless of the ultimate political and military situation in Indochina. Development of a Vietnamese national army constitutes, in our judgment, the number one military objective toward which US policy must be oriented. Political and psychological rewards will follow in the wake of strong visible indigenous armed strength, particularly if this strength is known to be supported by US experience and wherewithal.

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[3] For text of the reference telegram, see vol. XVI, p. 892.
[4] Telegram 4907 from Paris, June 17, is not printed. (751G.00/6-1754)
[5] Dated June 17, p. 1718.

Most vital ingredient in formula for attaining an effective Vietnamese national army is time. Minimum of 5 months from present date required to train and field initial divisions. To delay initiation of army build-up program, therefore gives enemy additional time in which to thwart undertaking before it produces desired results. Of equal importance to question of time is necessity for prompt utilization of US training know-how and support in form of instructors and personnel. No substitute for these ingredients exists.

Measures which can and should be initiated immediately to develop Vietnamese army are: Direct US assistance in training; assignment to chief, MAAG, Indochina, of authority to organize and conduct indigenous training, to include authority to execute, within limits of US policy directives, on-the-ground agreements to expedite training program; augmentation of MAAG to accommodate new training role; matériel support of training establishment and new indigenous forces.

While foregoing relates primarily to Vietnam, it is emphasized that approach applies equally to Cambodia and Laos.

The Department will recall that Cambodians have formally requested US assistance to form three divisions (May 20); that General Ely expressed verbally a desire for US training assistance, June 9, and that Buu Loc on June 18 requested US training assistance based on Ely's June 16 "memo of understanding".

If an Annamese/Cochin Chinese Republic were established and a national army made an effective fighting force, it should be militarily possible to hold narrow line along 18th parallel between Gulf of Tonkin and Annamite chain of mountains. It should likewise be possible by utilization of psychological warfare techniques and by judicious grant of economic aid to build up a national feeling of self-reliance in Annam and Cochin China which would at least for immediate future constitute a bulwark against Communist infiltration by familiar cold war techniques.

US should immediately address itself to problem of strengthening present regimes in Cambodia and Laos. Here populations are more homogeneous than in Vietnam and there are royal houses to which inhabitants are genuinely devoted. Likewise omnipresent corruption of Vietnam has not penetrated to same degree. Both countries are devoutly Buddhist and although his religion impels populace to negative attitudes, at same time it affords a moral base which is lacking in Vietnam, with exception of Catholic and certain confessional communities.

In Laos, human material is exceedingly weak as Laotians merely wish to live and let live and have no national ardor. However, Laos has an exceedingly favorable geographical situation from point of view of military defense, and with a little stiffening should be able to hold few river valleys and mountain defiles by which access to Mekong can be had from North and East.

In Cambodia, human material is more amenable to formation in military organization, although terrain from a military point of view makes defense a much more difficult problem. However, it should be possible, taking into account fact that populations of Thailand, Cambodia and Laos are all akin, that they possess a joint religion, and that militarily their defense problem is one, to work out a system of collective self-defense with US and other Western aid which would make it exceedingly difficult for Communist Viet Minh to gain these countries by open attack. Defense of Cambodia and Lower Laos would also be very much enhanced if there were an Annamese/Cochin Chinese Republic as a buffer state between Viet Minh Tonkin and the other two Indochinese kingdoms.

If foregoing analysis has any validity, recommendations to meet problem fall into two categories: Steps which should immediately be taken and steps which should be adopted over a more long range period of time. Among immediate steps I would submit following for Department's favorable consideration:

(1) There should be immediate inauguration of a military training program by MAAG, Saigon for Vietnam and Cambodia. In implementation this program, Chief, MAAG Indochina, to be furnished terms of reference by US Government defining limits within which he will carry out organization and conduct of training. It is essential to bring in training personnel as quickly as possible, as well as such equipment as may be needed for optimum number of divisions which MAAG Saigon will be able to train in immediate future. Communist armistice proposals at Geneva make very clear their intent to freeze military levels after a cease-fire, and to force withdrawal, if possible, not only of all foreign troops from Indochina, but all foreign technicians as well. Therefore, time is of essence if this objective is to be realized.

2. It is imperative that with utmost speed we revise basis of relationships between US and France and US and Associated States re conduct of foreign military operations and US financial backing for this war. Pentalateral agreement must be abrogated and replaced by agreement for direct US military assistance to the three Indochinese kingdoms including training assistance as outlined in preceding paragraph. Future relationship of US foreign aid program to France re French participation in Indochinese war must likewise be revised. Agreement of September 29, 1953 should be replaced by agreements

for direct US financial assistance to Associated States. Financial support to France so far as Indochina is concerned, should be in strict proportion to adequacy of French efforts in the war here. Of course, if French Government to its eternal credit decides not to capitulate and to continue war in Indochina with courage and vigor, US should give all-out support to such a resolve and assist in its implementation.

3. There should be a separate MAAG in Cambodia under general over-all supervision of Chief MAAG Saigon. MAAG Saigon should have a resident branch in Laos. MAAG's terms of reference for all three countries should be similar to those of our training and logistical missions in Korea, Formosa and Thailand.

Following long range recommendations are submitted for Department's consideration:

(1) US in response to an appeal from Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos for military intervention should, after negotiation of a Southeast Asia collective security pact, give guarantees with other signatories of that instrument of political and territorial integrity of Annam/Cochin Chinese Republic, of Kingdoms of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

(2) In this connection I strongly recommend that strategically vital air base at Tourane, which has only field built according to NATO specifications in Indochina, be made an international base for use of powers subscribing to an eventual collective security pact. Possession of Tourane base would be tangible evidence of retaliatory power of this coalition in event integrity of four Southeast Asian states were threatened by Viet Minh or Communist China.

(3) It is implicit if turn of events takes course forecast above that recognition of Bao Dai regime would be withdrawn and US would recognize Republic of Annam/Cochin China. To strengthen our representation in Cambodia and Laos Embassy at Phnom Penh and Legation at Vientiane should be presided over by a resident Ambassador and Minister respectively. Ambassador in Saigon would of course remain at that post.

(4) Both Cochin China and Cambodia are economically rich countries with no excess population and with large possibilities of becoming export surplus countries by use of proper management. US by technical assistance program could provide guidance in such management for immediate period after cessation of hostilities. US should be prepared grant a reconstruction loan to these three countries as we have done in Korea. Aid should be direct and not channeled through the French. Eventually, because of intrinsic earning power of these areas, it should be possible for World Bank to grant Cochin China and Cambodia a business-like bankers loan. Exception might, however, have to be made in case of Laos, which is a deficit country both in terms of national resources and population. Laos would require a financial subvention in addition to economic aid if it were to be kept in defense system outlined above.

(5) US financial and economic assistance should be given on terms of strict reciprocity; i.e., aid would be made available in return for actual performance by recipient governments. In Asia give-away pro-

grams are too frequently mistaken in the oriental mind as meaning that the donor not only has a soft heart but also a soft head.

(6) There is an unrivaled opportunity for use of psychological techniques in attempting to solve problem which Communists have solved and we have not. This is problem of providing people with some ideal for which to fight and some "mystique" which will give them fortitude and feeling of national accomplishment which is so markedly lacking on our side in this war and which is so markedly evident on Viet Minh side. It should, however, within lines advocated in this telegram, be possible to develop a feeling of solidarity as between three cognate Kingdoms of Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, stressing not only national affinities but likewise link of Buddhism. At same time our psychological specialists should seek to minimize historic fears and rivalries which have for so many centuries embittered relations between Cambodia and Cochin China. One important task which should be accomplished in psychological field is to commence an intensive program to give people of Indochina some knowledge of English. This is lingua franca of East from Suez to Japan but thus far Indochinese kingdoms, speaking only French as a foreign language, have been cut off from currents of thought now stirring in Asia.

Conclusion: Program offered above would necessitate sending of American military instructors and advisors to Indochina, but not American combat units and it would imply need for resolute and daring diplomacy and a readiness on part of United States to expend not so much funds as ideas in an effort to redress a thus far unfavorable situation. Program outlined must, however, have some backing of force if it is to succeed. It would nevertheless seem that within framework of time available to us it should be possible to negotiate a treaty of collective defense for Southeast Asia which would meet with support not only of the Western democracies which thus far have found themselves unable to concert their action in sufficient time, but with their people at interest, the Southeast Asian States themselves.

McClintock

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"

Memorandum by Charles C. Stelle to the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie)[1]

TOP SECRET [Washington,] June 24, 1954.

Subject: Observations on apple-cart-upsetting.

1. If newspaper accounts of the Mendes-France–Chou En-lai talks have any basis (as of yet we have no telegram in) it is clear that the momentum of the French slide is such that any conceivable program

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[1] Stelle was a member of the Policy Planning Staff. A handwritten notation on the source text read "Ed Gullion concurs." Gullion was also a member of S/P.

we might propose with regard to US intervention will (*a*) split our basic coalition and (*b*) appear to world and US opinion as a desperate US move to frustrate a cease-fire and free elections. We would appear in the unenviable position of being against both peace and democracy.

2. Whatever we may or may not be able to do to salvage something out of the Indochina situation it seems clear that we need a different climate to do it in. There is at hand, I think, one way of achieving a new climate. Very simply that is to bust up the Geneva Conference.

3. For our own withdrawal we have, in fact, already prepared the way. We have Congressional approval for disassociating ourselves from anything which will involve partition, or which will subvert the recognized governments. The Geneva negotiations are well past that stage. A US walkout will merely be the logical last step of disassociation.

4. But our withdrawal is not enough. The breaking off the Geneva talks would come with better logic and much greater force if it were done by the Associated States. A walkout by Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, which after all have been said to be independent, on grounds that the negotiations were moving in a direction which threatened their independence could clearly be justified. The US would then be able to assume a position of support for independent Asian nations which were exercising their independence.

5. The possibilities of persuading the Associated States to act are, in the case of Vietnam and Cambodia at least, very real. At an early stage we dissuaded the former Vietnamese delegation from walking out. The present Government of Vietnam is, whatever its failings, considerably more nationalistic than the last. The Cambodians have just appealed to us for assurances of support in order to be able to reject the most recent Communist proposals. We are replying in an affirmative fashion, and my guess is that they would be prepared to break off the talks. The Laotians, who are more under the French thumb, would be something of an unknown.

6. A breakup of Geneva will not, of course, keep the French from negotiating. But they will be doing it in that aura of solitary capitulation which they have been trying hardest to avoid. They will of course be furious, as will the British.

7. But a breakup of Geneva by the Associated States will place us in a position where we will have flexibility to see what requests for assistance come from whom. Ideally we should know in advance just which ones we will and will not honor. But we will not be committed to honor any of them and any subsequent action we may take can be justified as a response to the appeals of states striving to protect their independence.

8. We will also have flexibility, if by any chance the French come round to a different position, to help the French. And although there will be temporary rage in Paris, we will not, in fact, have taken any concrete step which necessarily jeopardizes our long run relations with the French.

9. I recommend, therefore, that we give serious immediate consideration to influencing the Associated States to breaking off the Geneva negotiations and to ourselves joining them in a walkout, selecting the most propitious early occasion.

CHARLES C. STELLE

State–JCS meetings, lot 61 D 417

Substance of Discussions of State–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting at the Pentagon Building, June 25, 1954, 11:30 a. m.[1]

TOP SECRET

[Here follow a list of those present (27) and discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

II *MDAP Equipment to Indochina*

Mr. Murphy called on Mr. Nolting[2] to touch on the elements of the problem of MDAP aid to Indochina.

Mr. Nolting said the problem divided itself conveniently into two parts: (*a*) direct aid to forces in Indochina; and (*b*) end item military assistance. He emphasized that (*a*) was not an immediate problem, since support for forces in the form of money could be continued up until the last minute without concern it would subsequently increase the enemy's military capabilities. What was of concern, however, was (*b*). It was necessary to scrutinize the flow of shipments into the area, the ports where the shipments were unloaded (Haiphong, Hanoi and Saigon), and the delicate question of timing and discussion of this subject with the French. Involved also was the legal angle, and the feasibility of any plan for the disposition of MDAP equipment already in French hands and on its way.

The question arose as to what reserves of ammunition and matériel were presently in the hands of the French. It was brought out that General Stewart's office had a study under way, and that instructions on the subject of submitting further information were being drafted for CINCPAC.

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[1] This State Department draft was not cleared with the participants.

[2] Frederick E. Nolting, Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Mutual Security Affairs.

Pursuing this matter further, the alternative advantages of (1) diverting shipments now in the pipeline, or (2) holding back those shipments was touched upon.

Mr. Murphy asked Mr. Nolting to review briefly the question of title to MDAP equipment, and terms of possible repossession. Mr. Nolting pointed out that under the terms of agreements with the French, it is the State Department's position that we have the right of repossession, but he added that procedures to that end had not been finalized. It was a question of timing, he said.

Admiral Duncan [3] asked if the decision which the JCS were asked to make was whether or not to divert, or to slow down shipments now. Admiral Radford indicated that it was difficult to reach a decision on that subject unless we knew how much matériel the French had left.

Mr. Hensel remarked that MAAG Saigon should know.

General Cabell said that it was a CIA estimate that they had approximately 600 planeloads of matériel in the Hanoi area.

Mr. Hensel said that his figure was 972,000-odd tons for the total of matériel which had been shipped to Indochina.

Admiral Duncan added that matériel evacuation plans for the Tonkin Delta included an estimate of some 10,000 vehicles and 382 artillery pieces in the Red River Delta area.

Mr. Robertson interjected that very shortly we would be faced with a Franco–Vietminh settlement and that it was urgently necessary to determine what to do with the matériel in the Delta.

Admiral Radford stated that it would be impossible to recover the matériel in the Hanoi–Haiphong area unless we were prepared to go in and do it ourselves by force, a development which would involve us very deeply in the fighting there.

This posed the advisability of destroying the matériel. The Admiral pointed out this would be difficult: We had no people who could do it overtly; there were complications in accomplishing destruction by covert means. Any attempt to evacuate matériel would take a very long time, since Haiphong can handle only two ships at once.

Mr. Robertson pressed his point that any cargoes in American ships going directly to Haiphong should now be diverted to Saigon. It was brought out that very few American ships bring supplies directly into Haiphong: they ordinarily offloaded at Saigon, whence the cargoes were moved north in French bottoms.

The question arose as to how much was presently in the pipeline. Precise data on this subject did not seem to be available. General Ridgway said that he had complete information on matériel yet to be shipped, but not on matériel already there, or on the way.

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[3] Adm. Donald B. Duncan, Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Mr. Hensel interjected to say that he felt we should delay everything for a little while, and accomplish a slow-down such as was applied to Yugoslavia some months ago in connection with the Trieste problem.

Admiral Duncan stated that if the French wished a settlement with the Vietminh, we should expect a return of our matériel, and we should expect also to stop any further shipments to Indochina.

Admiral Radford suggested that the JCS undertake a review of what matériel is on the way to Indochina, and on the basis of this information decide (*a*) whether to divert, or whether (*b*) to slow down, and (*c*) what action should be taken if a settlement between the French and Vietminh were reached.

Mr. Bowie favored informing the French that we expect them to get our matériel out in order to safeguard it from falling into Vietminh hands; and then to look into the question of what we do about it.

Admiral Radford reiterated that there was little chance of getting this enormous amount of equipment out. He emphasized again that in his opinion all of Viet Nam would eventually be lost, regardless of any terms of settlement. He inquired why the State Department could not find out from the French, since talks were currently under way between the French and the Vietminh, what the French plan to do about MDAP equipment in Indochina.

Mr. Murphy cautioned that under the language of our agreements with the French repossession would be difficult. He noted that repossession rights were apparently limited to matériel "no longer required for the purposes for which originally made available"; that it would have to be "offered" for return; and that he did not believe the French gave any cause for believing that they would be liberal in interpreting these clauses.

Admiral Radford then suggested that we inform the French that we expect them to get the matériel out. He said we could at least tell the French that they do not have authority to turn over this matériel to the Vietminh.

Ensuing discussion brought out the fact that the whole problem was complicated by the desire of the U.S. Government not to cut the ground out from under the French in her political or military efforts in Indochina, and not to give the French any ground for saying that we had torpedoed their talks with the Vietminh.

Mr. Murphy emphasized that we had not discussed the question of a slow-down, or of diversion of MDAP equipment with the Secretary, and would have to talk to him before any decision was taken. However, we could at once inform the French of our desire to know what precautions they had taken to safeguard MDAP matériel.

Mr. Murphy remarked we had no information concerning the cease-fire terms. He reverted to the situation during the fall of the French in 1940, when events moved so fast that no one knew what was happening until it was all over.

Mr. Nolting broke in to say that another club we have over the French is the $785 millions appropriated for Indochina. Mr. Murphy suggested that payment to the Vietnam forces should be continued. Admiral Radford agreed, but he inquired just who we would be doing business with if the French reached a settlement with the Vietminh.

Mr. Nolting pointed out that the $785 millions should be separated into two parts: (1) $400 millions for the French and other forces in Indochina not tied to the Navarre plan; and (2) $385 millions linked to the Navarre plan. We had solid grounds for stopping payments from the $385 million if a settlement eventuated.

Admiral Radford suggested that if we do not get the equipment back from the French, under any settlement, we could certainly charge the value of that equipment against these appropriations. The Navy Department, he said, could very well use these funds itself.

Mr. Murphy suggested that State talk further on this matter with Mr. Hensel's office, and it was agreed by everyone that all Departments were interested in economy in this operation.

Decisions:

1. Summing up, Admiral Radford said that the JCS would immediately look into the question of stopping shipments enroute. He said that the question of slowing down shipments was one for the Defense Department and not the JCS, though the JCS favors such a move, and favors also removing all supplies if possible, but with the realization that the U.S. will probably have to go in and get it without much help from our French friends.
2. Mr. Murphy said we would take a hard look at the question on our side; would talk with the Secretary about it; and should be in a position to give the JCS the benefit of our views within one week. Immediately, though, State would send a telegram to Paris inquiring what precautions the French had taken to safeguard MDAP equipment. (Admiral Radford suggested that General Trapnell might be available to help on this exercise.)

Mr. Nolting inquired if it were not true that deliveries to the Vietminh from the Chinese Communists had increased significantly in recent months. It was agreed that this was so. Mr. Nolting then inquired what effect a simultaneous decrease in U.S. supplies would have, if it became known that such a decrease had been ordered.

Admiral Duncan said it would be difficult, if not impossible, to hide such a development.

Mr. Hensel thought it could be kept under wraps for a week or ten days. He was virtually alone in this view, and the Chiefs indicated concern over the psychological effect of such a step on the part of the U.S.

Mr. Murphy concluded by saying that unfortunately the Vietminh might end up being the best equipped army in Asia. Mr. Robertson noted wryly that at Dien Bien Phu the Vietminh has seized enough matériel to equip two divisions.

III *Evacuation of Non-American Personnel from Tonkin Delta*

Mr. Murphy referred to this item, and inquired if there were any developments.

Admiral Radford confirmed that plans were up-to-date.

Admiral Gardner added that there had now been injected into the problem the question just discussed, namely, the problem of removing equipment from the Tonkin Delta. He said that approximately 110,000 civilian French and native people were involved, with the complement of military personnel unknown.

Mr. Bowie inquired concerning the period of time needed to effect this evacuation.

Admiral Radford stated that this depended upon the pressure under which the evacuation was accomplished. If it were a question of removing people only, the evacuation would not take so long; but if it were a question of removing also large amounts of equipment, the operation might take several months, if not more than a year.

To an inquiry, Admiral Radford replied that if there were a cease-fire in Indochina, presumably it would be the responsibility of the French to evacuate their own people from the delta, and the problem would, under such conditions, not fall on the U.S.

Mr. Murphy closed this part of the discussion by indicating that so far the French have not asked us for assistance in this operation.

IV *Aid and Training for Cambodia*

Mr. Murphy called on Mr. Robertson to discuss the question of aid and training to Cambodia.

Mr. Robertson pointed out that the communists were putting the squeeze on Cambodia, by offering to withdraw Vietminh troops against Cambodia's commitment to allow no bases to free world forces, and to receive no supplies from the Free World. As an indication of the present situation in Cambodia, Mr. Robertson read excerpts from Saigon's telegram no. 2894, June 24,[4] reporting a sharp upturn of Cambodian morale and making a strong recommendation that we provide Cambodia with necessary war matériel and, if possible, with a training mission. He also read excerpts from a draft State telegram in reply in which the U.S. undertook to encourage the Cambodians in their anti-communist stand, and in their reliance upon us for aid and assistance. In supporting the tenor of his telegram, Mr. Robertson inquired: what else could we do, if we were not going to write Cambodia off entirely?

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[4] Telegram 2894 from Saigon, June 24, summarizing discussions held that day by McClintock with Cambodian officials at Phnom Penh, is not printed. (751G.00/6-2454)

Admiral Radford indicated that it was ultimately a question of breaking with the French and dealing directly with the Cambodians. He stated that, from a practical point of view, under any "partition" settlement Vietnam would eventually be entirely lost to us, and that consequently we were more or less forced to help Cambodia. He thought that any aid or training mission might possibly be run from Bangkok under the MAAG there.

It was pointed out that any aid that might be required under any conceivable program for Cambodia would not amount to much, since the Cambodian army amounted to only 20,000 troops. It was agreed to get Mr. Robertson's telegram off right away, in spite of what Mr. Murphy was confident would be strong French opposition.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"

Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 25, 1954.

Subject: US Policy on Indochina

Alternative US policy possibilities

Inaction

1. US inaction with regard to Indochina and a US attitude of washing its hands of whatever comes out of Geneva will almost certainly lead to one of two alternative results:

a. The Communists will agree to and the French will accept a settlement which, while providing for a temporary cessation of hostilities on a line possibly in the vicinity of the waist of Indochina, will include such provisions on phased withdrawal of French forces and on early elections as to assure a rapid Communist take-over of all Indochina; or

b. The Communists will be encouraged to make demands which even the French will find it impossible to accept and the Communists will proceed to the military conquest of Indochina.

2. Achievement by the Communists of either of these alternatives, while the US stands aside, will:

a. Radically increase Communist appetite for and confidence in their capacity successfully to undertake further immediate expansion of the area of Communist domination;

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[1] A handwritten notation on the source text states that this paper was seen by Secretary Dulles. Additional marginal notations indicate that it was drafted by Charles C. Stelle of the Policy Planning Staff and represented a revision of a portion of a paper by Edmund A. Gullion, also of S/P, on U.S. policy in Indochina. The Gullion paper, dated June 23, is in PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina".

b. Dangerously decrease the will and capacity of the remaining free states of Southeast Asia to resist further Communist expansion;

c. Bring heavy political and economic pressure on Japan for a shift from its present policy of cooperation with the US;

d. So increase defeatism in and recriminations among the US and its Western partners, particularly France and the UK, as seriously to jeopardize the basic US-led coalition.

Action

3. In the present situation, with French lack of will to continue the Indochina fighting by themselves, with reduction of Communist worries about possible US intervention, and with the political and military weakness of the local states, any conceivable line of US action with regard to Indochina must of necessity include one essential ingredient—demonstrated willingness by the US to use US armed forces either to secure a US objective or to guarantee a settlement. The only alternatives to inaction all have as a basis a US willingness to intervene with armed force.

4. All courses of action are moreover premised on a US willingness to use its own armed forces, if necessary alone. We have no hope of getting UK participation in using forces in Indochina, at least at this time. We may or may not be able to secure French participation. But we can act independently, and still, by patient explanation to our friends of the reasons for actions, keep our basic coalition intact. The alliance will be less harmed by carefully justified US independent action, than it will be by US pressures to force our friends to do what they will not do, or by mutual recriminations after the loss of all Indochina.

5. Alternative possible courses of US action, together with their major implications are:

a. Immediate US intervention in Tonkin.

At this stage it is clear that such action by the US would (1) alienate the US from the UK and probably the remainder of the Commonwealth; (2) be opposed by the French who would probably seek to forestall it by a rapid capitulation to Communist demands; (3) involve maximum risk of provoking a general war with Communist China, and some risk of development of global war. The US would have to expect to be without major Allies in either case.

b. Threaten the Communists with introduction of US forces if they do not agree to an armistice based on the present situation, as the US defines it.

This course of action would involve a US commitment to support retention by the French of a position in the delta. There might be possibilities of Communist acceptance. There could be, however, no assurance that the French, under Communist pressure, would stick to demands for a position in the delta, and the US might again be faced with having taken a position only to be deserted by an ally.

c. Introduce US forces south of the line Thak Kek–Dong Hoi either to support a settlement based on that line or to defend the line.

If the line were established by agreement, the use of force by the US would be contingent on a violation of the line. If the line were established by US intervention there would be risk of provoking Chinese Communist intervention, but less than if the US intervened in Tonkin. The Five-Power Military Conference has estimated that the line could be defended against Viet Minh attack by four divisions, in addition to those needed to maintain order in the area.

The situation in South Vietnam would in any case be so precarious that without US troops, military aid, and economic assistance, and without a reversal of French policies, there would be slim prospects of viability. If these conditions were met there would be substantial prospects of organizing a position of some stability in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

Recommendations

Either action or inaction involves serious risks for US security. On balance, the following appears to be the best choice among the available alternatives.

a. The US should decide that it will take whatever measures are necessary to preserve a non-Communist position South of the line Thak Kek–Dong Hoi.

b. The US should tell the French that it will support with US forces an armistice which:

(1) Preserves as a minimum all territory South of the line Thak Kek–Dong Hoi;

(2) Does not exclude the introduction of US military equipment or personnel;

(3) Does not contain political provisions likely to result in a Communist take-over.

c. The US should make clear to the French that if their negotiations seem to be leading toward a settlement which does not meet the above points the US will feel free to take such actions as may be necessary to assure continuation of a non-Communist position South of the line.

d. If the French do appear to be imperiling such a position by their negotiations, the U.S. should:

(1) Induce the Associated States to withdraw, along with the US, from the Geneva Conference;

(2) Provide such assistance to the Associated States, including US armed forces, as may be necessary to hold and develop a stable position South of the line Thak Kek–Dong Hoi.

e. The US should attempt to get support from Asian nations and its Western allies for the above courses of action and to have the line accepted as part of the frontier of any Southeast Asia pact.

f. As in Korea and Germany, the US should treat the division of Indochina not as definitive, but as provisional until unity can be achieved.

g. The US should immediately initiate a vigorous aid program, a troop training program, and other appropriate measures to promote a stronger Southern Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and to foster the development of native governments prepared to live up to their responsibilities.

h. The US should press the French to grant complete political and economic independence in the area south of the line, and to dramatize this independence by appropriate measures.

i. The US should endeavor to bring the above actions within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations.

Editorial Note

From June 25 to June 29, 1954, British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden visited Washington for conversations with President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles. Numerous subjects of mutual interest were discussed, including the questions of Indochina, the Geneva Conference, and collective security in Southeast Asia.

The most significant discussion of Indochina in its Southeast Asian context occurred at a meeting between Dulles and Eden and their advisers on June 26. On June 27, Dulles and Eden approved an Agreed Minute on Southeast Asia, providing for the establishment of a United States–United Kingdom Joint Study Group on the area. On June 28, Eisenhower and Churchill issued a statement summarizing their talks, which read in part as follows:

> "We discussed Southeast Asia and, in particular, examined the situation which would arise from the conclusion of an agreement on Indochina. We also considered the situation which would follow from failure to reach such an agreement.
>
> "We will press forward with plans for collective defense to meet either eventuality.
>
> "We are both convinced that if at Geneva the French Government is confronted with demands which prevent an acceptable agreement regarding Indochina, the international situation will be seriously aggravated."

For the records of the Dulles–Eden meetings of June 26 and June 27, the Agreed Minute on Southeast Asia, the statement of June 28, and related material, see volume VI. For additional documentation on aspects of the talks relating to a settlement in Southeast Asia and collective security arrangements for that area, see volume XII.

751G.00/6–2654 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, June 26, 1954—2 p. m.

2908. Repeated information Paris 1032, Geneva 266, London 76, Hanoi unnumbered. British Minister called on me this morning. He said he was convinced that French had decided partition of Vietnam leaving Tonkin to Viet Minh. He questioned, however, whether Communists at this time would press for more than Tonkin as they might not wish to alarm Western opinion by attempting to take all of Vietnam at once. Graves thought that a solution could be reached re Cambodia and Laos and seemed disposed to feel that even an agreement "neutralizing" these countries would be acceptable. I said I did not share this opinion as I thought it strategically essential that at least Cambodia have opportunity to build up a military force which might become a real deterrent factor and that in Laos, although prospects were less bright, there was no reason to give away too much too soon. I likewise dwelt on strategic importance of air base at Tourane which could interdict British line of communications between Hong Kong and Singapore.

Graves felt that Bao Dai was finished in Vietnam and expressed doubt whether Ngo Dinh Diem could succeed in rallying people around him. He expects, as do I, that very soon shrill cries for help will be heard from the Vietnamese.

McClintock

751G.00/6–2054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy at Saigon[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, June 26, 1954—5:21 p. m.

2738. Limited distribution. Pass Chief MAAG. Joint State Defense Message. Saigon 2826[2] and 2846.[3] Buu Loc letter transmitted Saigon 2826 raises problem whether or what to respond to formal request government Vietnam for large-scale training program at time when current policy directives State and Defense have clearly outlined opposition participation such program until and unless certain conditions have been satisfied. Department's 2588[4] and Defense's DA 962839[5] express our continuing policy.

Additionally, we now have to reckon with policy Mendes-France

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[1] Drafted by Hoey and Sturm of PSA. Also sent to Paris as telegram 4841 and to Geneva as Tosec 487.

[2] Telegram 2826 from Saigon, June 18, not printed, contained the text of a letter from outgoing Premier Buu Loc to Chargé McClintock expressing approval of arrangements between General O'Daniel and General Ely providing for a larger role for the United States in the training of Vietnamese forces. (751G.5 MSP/6–1854)

[3] Telegram 2846 from Saigon, June 20, not printed, contained the text of a reply which McClintock proposed to send to Buu Loc. (751G.00/6–2054)

[4] For telegram 4551 to Paris, June 12, repeated to Saigon as telegram 2588, see p. 1684.

[5] In telegram DA 962839, June 16, General Ridgway advised General O'Daniel that negotiations with France regarding a possible U.S. role in Indochina had not been completed and that therefore agreements on military details should not be concluded until governmental decisions were made and intergovernmental agreements were reached. (751G.5/6–1654)

Government to end fighting by July 20, with uncertainties and dangers that such policy implies. At same time new government coming to power Vietnam. We have no way knowing what policies it will pursue, or with what success. Military situation Vietnam obliges us consider what measures may be necessary prevent American equipment falling into hands Communists and has direct bearing on provision additional equipment for proposed divisions.

We recognize, however, that our constant emphasis on need for training Vietnamese army may have led government Vietnam expect from US large-scale training programs, material assistance and financial support which as yet have not been approved by US Government.

At same time we must avoid any action which might contribute disintegration military and political situation Indochina through fostering assumption that we are "writing off Indochina".

Action Embassy Saigon:

With reference note from Government Vietnam (Saigon's 2826 and 2846), we believe under present circumstances no written reply, other than acknowledgment already made, should be made this time. In light factors mentioned above, only reply we could make would be substantially negative. Therefore Embassy Saigon should inform Prince Buu Loc orally, if it still feels reply must be made outgoing Prime Minister, that question US participation National Army training will be discussed with incoming Prime Minister Diem when he has had opportunity consider this problem. Oral reply should indicate that General O'Daniel has been directed within scope means available to him to assist by advice wherever possible in developing training program National Army. It should be made clear that we are not now in position undertake training Vietnamese divisions, pending decisions at governmental level.

Action Chief MAAG Saigon:

Ref MG 1724A and MG 1750A.[6] Your recent requests for personnel augmentation have been granted to large degree. You are authorized continue discussions with appropriate French military authorities toward end that your MAAG assist by advising in training activities Vietnam National Army. Utilization MAAG personnel such advisory capacity must be commensurate with efficient accomplishment their primary duties, in accordance Defense guidance ref use adm personnel tng functions, and is not to be construed as US approval MAAG tng mission for Vietnamese armed forces. Temporary mobile US training teams, if requested by French, should make useful contribution training program. (WAR 84822).[7] Decision that US undertake training functions proposed Vietnamese light divisions still awaiting clarification complex political-military situation. No additional financial responsibility can be undertaken by US this time.

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[6] Telegrams MG 1724A, June 16, and MG 1750A, June 20, from General O'Daniel at Saigon to the Department of the Army, urging a greater U.S. training role, are not printed. (751G.5/6-1654; 751G.5/6-2054)

Action Embassy and MAAG Paris:

General De Shazo,[8] after consultation Ambassador Dillon, is authorized inform General Ely Department Defense has approved augmentation approximately 90 additional personnel who are being sent MAAG Saigon undertake planning as well administrative functions. Of this group 12 officers have already arrived. General O'Daniel is authorized, in consultation General Ely and military officials Vietnam develop plans by which his present MAAG personnel plus augmentations can be utilized fullest degree assist advising on training Vietnamese troops. Such utilization personnel must be commensurate with efficient accomplishment their primary duties, in accordance with Defense guidance ref use adm personnel training functions, and is not to be construed as US approval MAAG tng mission Vietnamese armed forces. General Ely should be informed that in this connection US does not undertake assume any additional financial responsibility pay and maintenance Vietnamese troops. Decision as to US undertaking training Vietnamese light divisions still awaits action French and US Governments.

Dulles

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[7] Not found in Department of State files.

[8] Maj. Gen. Thomas E. de Shazo, Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Paris.

Eisenhower Library, White House Office, "Legislative Leadership Conference"

Memorandum by the Assistant Staff Secretary to the President (Minnich)[1]

[Washington,] June 28, 1954.

Indo-China—Sec. Dulles told the Leaders there were some signs of a solution developing. He said that if there is to be a line drawn to separate the free world from Communist in Southeast Asia, it must be a line that the people in that area are prepared to join in defending, for the United States cannot be expected to rush in singlehandedly. As it is shaping up, the line would put on the side of the free world the states of Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, and a part of Indo-China. Many uncertainties remain, and he thought it a matter of making the best of a bad situation as in Korea.

The President wanted to add emphasis to the impossibility of the

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[1] The source text, labeled "Supplementary Notes," is attached to the Minnich memorandum covering discussions on Indochina for the period Feb. 8–July 26, 1954. Regarding that memorandum, see footnote 1, p. 1023.

United States going into any area to give support unless the support were requested. Also, the U.S. would be bogged down from the start if the people of any area got the idea that we would rush in on their request no matter how they handle things. So there will not be any sort of guarantee as was involved in the Locarno Pact. The President asserted the general principles of our behavior were laid down as much as fifteen months ago.

Responding to Sen. Knowland's question, Sec. Dulles said the French were still hoping for some sort of an enclave to be maintained in the Delta region, but this didn't really seem possible for more than a very brief period if at all.

Mr. Dulles said we were not fully taken into their confidence by the French, that the French were carrying on some private talks. He went on to remark how a message had come just yesterday from Mendes-France giving expression to his hope that should the talks break down we would take a very serious view of the situation.[2] He felt this was a strange message, given all our past effort to get the French to take a serious view of it!

Sen. Knowland wanted all precautions taken to see that any supplies we had furnished for the Delta area should be gotten out to safety rather than being left behind for the Communists. The President didn't think the French would just walk out on the situation, and the "regrouping" under discussion did not just mean surrender. Mr. Dulles said we had a legal right to repossess those materials if they were not being used in the way intended, but of course there could be a very great problem in actually repossessing. Sen. Knowland wanted to be sure there was advance planning for sufficient shipping to be in the area in case a time limit were put on any evacuation decided upon. The President and Mr. Dulles had already alerted Defense to this.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

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[2] For the message under reference, see telegram 4852 to Paris, June 28, *infra*.

751G.00/6-2854 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, June 28, 1954—7:10 p. m.

4852. Following is translation *aide-mémoire* delivered by Bonnet to Secretary and Eden June 26.[2] Text coordinated US–UK reply contained next following message.[3]

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[1] Drafted by McBride of WE. Repeated to London as telegram 7146, to Saigon as telegram 2746, and to Geneva as Tosec 489.

[2] British Foreign Secretary Eden was on visit in Washington (see editorial note, p. 1751). The copy of the *aide-mémoire* signed by Ambassador Bonnet is in file 751G.00/6-2854.

[3] *Infra.*

"The coming weeks will be of decisive importance insofar as Indochina is concerned. Following his conversation with Mr. Chou En-lai, the head of the French Government has instructed M. Chauvel to approach M. Phan [*Pham*] Van Dong with a view to carrying on with him directly negotiations to ascertain whether a basis can be found, in his opinion, for a territorial settlement in Vietnam or not.[4]

"The objective of the French Government is to arrive at a regrouping which will assure the State of Vietnam a territory as solid as possible, and without the *de facto* division which will result being too cut up. That is the reason why the French Government will insist on maintaining Haiphong as long as possible and on obtaining the neutralization of the bishoprics of Bui Chu and Phat Diem.

"It is difficult to predict the result of this negotiation in which the French authorities must face two sorts of difficulties: on the one hand it will be most difficult to obtain concessions from the Viet Minh in the north; and on the other hand the negotiations risk causing, if the agreement is concluded, dangerous reactions by the Vietnamese Government whose citizens are serving at the present time under the orders of the French command, comprising a major proportion thereof.

"The French Prime Minister feels that the allied American and British governments should be as well informed as possible of these possibilities. M. Mendes-France wishes especially to call the attention of these two Governments to the following aspects of the situation:

"(1) If the Viet Minh appears disposed to negotiate, it is for a series of reasons among which figure without doubt the fear of a spreading of the conflict, a spreading which nothing at the present time would lead us to expect, but which the general world situation does not permit us to exclude. Although the fear of such an extension of the conflict may have a determining influence on the decisions of our adversaries, the French Government realizes that precise declarations on this subject are not possible at this time. But it considers it would be very useful if the final communiqué of the Anglo-American talks in Washington could state in some fashion or other that, if it is not possible to reach a reasonable settlement at the Geneva Conference, a serious aggravation of international relations would result.[5]

"(2) The problem which is posed with regard to Vietnam is different. It is to be feared that any solution providing for an indefinite period a division of the country will cause a violent and unreasoning reaction on the part of the Vietnamese patriots. While this reaction may be in a large measure inevitable, every effort should nevertheless be made to canalize this reaction in a direction in conformity with the interests of Vietnam, France and their allies.

"To this end it appears highly desirable to the Prime Minister of France to obtain the assurance of the United States Government that nothing will be done by the latter which might even implicitly encourage such a reaction. Under present circumstances such action could lead to no result but to ruin any hope of seeing Vietnam consolidate herself in such a fashion as to create in the face of the Viet Minh an authentically national and independent force. It is for this reason that the French Government strongly hopes it can count on the United States at the proper moment to intervene with the Vietnamese to counsel upon them wisdom and self-control and to dissuade them from refusing an agreement which, if it is reached, is dictated not by the spirit of abandoning them, but on the contrary by the desire to save in Indochina all that can possibly be saved, and to give the Vietnamese state, under peaceful conditions, opportunities which have not always been possible heretofore because of the war." [6]

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[4] Premier Mendès-France met with Chou En-lai, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and head of its delegation at the Geneva Conference, at Bern on June 23. For information on that meeting, see telegram Secto 517 from Geneva and telegram 5035 from Paris, both June 24, vol. XVI, pp. 1233 and 1239. Regarding the conversations between Jean Chauvel (acting head of the French Delegation at Geneva) and Pham Van Dong (head of the Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam), see *ibid.*, pp. 1266 ff.

[5] See editorial note, p. 1751.

Dulles

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[6] Telegram 39 to Paris, July 2, repeated for information to Saigon and Geneva, read as follows: "ReDeptel 4852, June 28; Saigon 2746, Geneva 489. It seems to me that new Vietnamese Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, who has reputation of uncompromising nationalist, is quite in the dark about developments critically affecting country he is trying to lead. We fear that if results of French negotiations with Communists are revealed to him as a *fait accompli*, the very reaction French wish to avoid will result.

"You should therefore indicate our concern to the French and ascertain their own intentions with respect to consulting him or minimizing his resentment and their views with respect to plans and prospects for maintaining order in South Vietnam." (751G.00/7-254)

751.5 MSP/6-1254 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, June 28, 1954—7 : 10 p. m.

4853. Re Deptel 4852 repeated Geneva Tosec 489 and Saigon 2746.[2] In concert with your UK colleague you should when further instructed by Department make parallel communication following reply to French *Aide-Mémoire* set forth reftel. This reply has been cleared by Eden and we expect Churchill's concurrence tomorrow morning.[3]

In drafting this reply below we had in mind that it should tend stiffen French position so that they would not accept terms which we would be unwilling respect. (FYI UK sending a similar message Jebb [4] but is informing him that he may orally add that HMG would be willing if French Government desires to give diplomatic support to French Government in order secure an agreement on lines set forth joint instruction below. This we are unwilling to do as we informed British. End FYI.)

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[1] Drafted by MacArthur. Repeated to Geneva as Tosec 490, to Saigon as telegram 2748, and to London as telegram 7147.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] In telegram 4858 to Paris, June 29, the Embassy was informed that the text of the message had now been approved by the British and should therefore be delivered to the French Government in concert with the British Embassy. (751G.00/6-2954) Ambassador Dillon reported in telegram 5099 from Paris, June 30, that the message had been delivered. (751G.00/6-3054)

[4] Sir Gladwyn Jebb, British Ambassador in France.

Begin verbatim text.[5] The US Government/HMG have taken note of the French Government's communication. They appreciate being informed of this expression of the French Government's position in the current negotiations for an armistice agreement on Indochina. The US Government/HMG would be willing to respect an agreement which:

1. preserves the integrity and independence of Laos and Cambodia and assures the withdrawal of Vietminh forces therefrom;
2. preserves at least the southern half of Vietnam, and if possible an enclave in the Delta; in this connection we would be unwilling to see the line of division of responsibility drawn further south than a line running generally west from Dong Hoi;
3. does not impose on Laos, Cambodia or retained Vietnam any restrictions materially impairing their capacity to maintain stable non-Communist regimes; and especially restrictions impairing their right to maintain adequate forces for internal security, to import arms and to employ foreign advisers;
4. does not contain political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area to Communist control;
5. does not exclude the possibility of the ultimate unification of the Vietnam by peaceful means;
6. provides for the peaceful and humane transfer, under international supervision, of those people desiring to be moved from one zone to another of Vietnam; and
7. provides effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement. *End text.*

Dulles

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[5] The first draft of the text which follows was developed by a U.S.–U.K. working group which met at the Department of State on Saturday afternoon, June 26. That draft was circulated as U.S. document CEV Memo–7, June 26. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 339) The draft, as slightly revised, was approved by Secretary Dulles and Foreign Secretary Eden at their meeting of June 29 as document CEV Memo–7b. At the Eisenhower–Dulles–Churchill–Eden meeting of June 29, the British confirmed their approval of the joint instructions. For the records of the meetings of June 29 and document CEV Memo–7b, see volume VI.

On July 1, Secretary Dulles reported to the National Security Council on the Churchill–Eisenhower conversations. The summary of his report contained in the memorandum of discussion at the 205th NSC Meeting read in part as follows:

"Secretary Dulles said that the most significant action with respect to Southeast Asia had been the formulation of a joint US–UK position regarding a settlement in Indochina. This joint position had been communicated to the French Government and basic instructions with regard to this position transmitted to our representatives at Geneva. In general this position indicated what we would be willing 'to respect' by way of a settlement. In substance, Laos and Cambodia would be left as free and independent states with the capability of maintaining their integrity. Likewise, approximately half of Vietnam would remain non-Communist south of a line drawn approximately along the 18th parallel. In the course of defining this joint US–UK position, differences of view had emerged. The US had hoped to produce a definite agreement with the UK not to accept anything less favorable than this position. Churchill and Eden, on the other hand, had merely wished to state a hope that the French wouldn't settle for anything less than this position. A compromise had been reached, but complete agreement was not achieved and we will continue to take a stiffer line than the British." (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file)

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 331

Memorandum of a Meeting Between Ambassador Donald R. Heath and the Chief of State of Vietnam (Bao Dai) at Cannes, France, June 28, 1954[1]

TOP SECRET

The following is an account of my conversation with Bao Dai at Cannes, the evening of June 28. My schedule was so rushed in Paris, I did not have the time to report it telegraphically from there.

Bao Dai was a rather craven spectacle. There was no question of "fighting to the end" against the Viet Minh as Bao Dai assured me two months ago he and "his army" were prepared to do. He probably is an ill man now, and at my hotel in Cannes I found a letter from his physician urging me to urge Bao Dai to take six weeks of complete rest, including a cure at Vittel. Whether ill or not, there is no question but that he personally has "capitulated" unless we intervene militarily to pull his chestnuts out of the fire.

After deploring the sudden turn for the worse his health had taken, and the necessity of a "rest" and a "cure", he asked me what I thought would be the result of the Geneva Conference. I told him I thought the Viet Minh were expecting a partition of the country, with their getting the country north of Dong Hoi except for an enclave around Haiphong and possible special "protective measures" for the bishoprics of Buy Chu and Phat Diem. Bao Dai said that his information was that the Viet Minh would not ask for partition, but would instead insist on coalition arrangements between the two regimes. They might even accept him, nominally, as Chief of State but would ask for key ministries, such as that of the Interior. He had understood that some such sort of an arrangement, with nationwide elections to be held within a year after cease-fire, had been proposed by Chou En Lai and accepted by Mendes-France at Bern. Bao Dai then said if such a request were made with assurances of safe withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps, how could France refuse it—how could America refuse it? The southern Vietnamese would accept it, first because they knew little about Communism and secondly because they would rather have "peace" than fight. The Vietnamese National Army, which a few weeks ago Bao Dai had praised, now was described by the latter as completely unsure. The Viet Minh were already organized in Saigon, he said, and could stage an uprising, peaceful or violent, at any moment.

I said it was possible that the Viet Minh might propose a coalition government—that was one of the cheapest and surest Communist tricks,—witness Czechoslovakia and Poland. I asked Bao Dai whether he thought it was conceivable that Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem might arouse a national spirit of resistance. Bao Dai said, cynically, he had really never understood why Ngo Dinh Diem had accepted to head the government. He had asked Diem what would be his policy, negotiate with the Viet Minh? Diem had replied he would not negotiate with the Viet Minh and he would count on the aid of America. Bao Dai then allowed that if America were ready to intervene militarily that the Viet Minh would back down since they were "dreadfully afraid" of American participation. With American intervention, the National Army could be strengthened decisively to defeat the Viet Minh.

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[1] Drafted by Ambassador Heath in Washington on June 30.

But, Bao Dai said, it was useless to speculate what might happen since Mendes-France had already made up his mind to "drop" Viet-Nam, and there was nothing he or anyone else could do to prevent it. I answered that, while I was without instructions from my government and that I would neither urge him to oppose Mendes-France's views or accept them, Viet-Nam was a sovereign nation and its attitude certainly had to be taken into account by Mendes-France. The latter had said that he would not sign a "capitulation" to the Viet Minh, and I felt that he would not make a firm agreement with the Viet Minh without consulting the Vietnamese and American governments.

He again raised the question of American military intervention, to which I avoided replying directly, but quoted to him a remark made by the Secretary to Dinh, former Vietnamese Foreign Minister, during the early days of the Geneva Conference, to the effect that if a country were really determined to resist attack against its integrity that it would find friends and allies, but if no such determination were present no support would be forthcoming. Bao Dai shrugged that off.

Although he had already told me that he would have to remain in France to take a cure at Vittel, I asked him again whether he was not considering returning to Viet-Nam, and whether such action on his part would not have a strengthening effect on Vietnamese public opinion. He shrugged that off too.

I, accordingly, took leave of him and made no reference to seeing him again. Throughout the conversation Bao Dai was ill at ease, as indeed he should have been. It was more than clear that he has no intention of doing anything so risky as returning to Viet-Nam under present conditions and that he would accept with only *pro forma* remonstrance, if that, any deal Mendes-France might make with Viet Minh. Thanks to the complicity of the French exchange control he has gotten a very sizeable fortune outside of Viet-Nam.

The following day in Paris I saw Ngo Dinh Luyen, who is functioning as "Ambassador at large", of his brother, the new Vietnamese Prime Minister Designate. Luyen confirmed to me that Bao Dai would not return to Viet-Nam unless American intervention occurred and made it safe for him to do so. Luyen, in fact, did not want Bao Dai to return at this time, since his return would be accompanied by intrigue and complicate a difficult, and if indeed not impossible, task of trying to awaken the spirit of national unity and resistance. Luyen said that the Cao Daist and Hoa Hao sects, General Hinh, Chief of Staff of the Viet-Nam National Army, and the Vietnamese Security Police were all against his brother's efforts to form a government of national unity, and the French would give him no support. Nevertheless, he thought his brother, because of his spirit and courage, would somehow succeed, particularly if he could be given at least "moral support" of America at this time. He asked if it were not possible for the American government to make some public declaration of support of his brother. I told him I would discuss the matter in Washington.

751G.00/6-2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, June 29, 1954—7 p. m.

5093. Repeated information Saigon 633. Re Embtel 5074 not repeated to Saigon.[1] Ely came to see me this afternoon for an unofficial talk before returning to Indochina, which he plans to do at the end of the week. I took up with him the question of safeguarding end item equipment as indicated in reftel and he gave me absolute assurances that no such equipment would pass into the hands of the Viet Minh, except in cases where the French forces might be defeated in battle.

Ely said he was pleased to hear of the additional U.S. officers being assigned to O'Daniel. He said that he wished to make his over all position on training clear. It is that he considers the war in Indochina to be a civil war which must be fought on the political as well as the military front. In the long run the only people who can fight it effectively are the Vietnamese themselves. He feels that nothing would give the people of Vietnam more of a feeling of independence than an army of their own which was substantially trained by the U.S. For that reason he was strongly in favor of the U.S. undertaking the training of native troops in Vietnam. He felt the problem was as much one of morale as of military efficiency.

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[1] In telegram 4825 to Paris, June 25, the Department of State instructed Ambassador Dillon to raise with Premier Mendès-France the question of the safeguarding of U.S. MDAP equipment. (751G.00/6-2554) Dillon reported in telegram 5074 from Paris, June 29, not printed, that the Premier had that day expressed sympathy with the concern of the United States. He asked the Ambassador to discuss the matter further with General Ely, with whom Dillon was to meet that afternoon. (751G.00/6-2954)

I pointed out to him that although the additional officers could be used for training, they did not constitute a new training mission and that he would have to discuss this subject with O'Daniel in Saigon. He said that he realized this and that while he would prefer the U.S. to undertake the complete training of Vietnam forces, including the sending of U.S. officers into combat with Vietnam troops as advisers, he had never attempted to hide the fact from O'Daniel that this would naturally draw the U.S. a good deal further into the war than they were at present. He said he could well understand it if the U.S. was not prepared to undertake this form of training. However, he hoped that they could work out the next best compromise.

He said that he felt that the Western Powers had lost tremendously in prestige in the last two or three months as against world communism and that the negotiations with the Viet Minh had become much more difficult because of the Viet Minh belief that the menace of U.S. intervention no longer existed. He said that the only way to stand up to the Communists was to have complete unity and that the obvious lack of unity among the three great Western Powers in the last few months had had a terribly damaging effect in the world generally.

He said his own position was particularly difficult because he had to regroup his forces so as to protect them from possible annihilation. This meant giving up territory in the middle of negotiations which, naturally, did not facilitate the negotiations. In answer to a question he said he expected the regrouping to be completed in the next 10 or 15 days.

As he left he said he wished he were back in Washington with the standing group instead of having to handle the present situation in Indochina, which seemed to him very nearly impossible on both the military and the political fronts.

DILLON

751G.00/6–2954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, June 29, 1954—10 p. m.

2932. Repeated information Paris 1041, Geneva 271, Hanoi 559. I called today on Prime Minister designate Ngo Dinh Diem. He received me with his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, who quite evidently serves as an informal co-Prime Minister. Both brothers were in deep despair at decision of French military to persist in evacuation of Phat Diem and Bui Chu provinces in Tonkin and by their lively fear that French are actually in process of negotiating a capitulatory peace with the Viet Minh.

Diem said that he had urgently requested General Salan to refrain from evacuating Bui Chu and Phat Diem, at least until Vietnamese Government could be formed and the military situation could be in some wise redressed. However, Salan had this morning told Diem that he had received explicit instructions from Paris to continue evacuation.

Diem asked if US could lend diplomatic support to Vietnam in bringing pressure to bear on French Government to reverse this policy. Both brothers seemed not to expect armed intervention from US or anything more than diplomatic support at this time. In fact, their feeling of being abandoned is concerned solely with the French who they feel are dropping Vietnam in a cold-blooded manner.

I said that I could not promise that my government would undertake the representations they requested but that I would immediately transmit their request for the urgent consideration of my government.

Diem and his brother then discussed possibility of a mass evacuation of population from Tonkin in event French should sign an arrangement which in effect would leave Tonkin in Viet Minh hands. They said that rapid action would be imperative as Viet Minh would be able very quickly to scatter population and thus principal manpower resource of Vietnam would be irretrievably lost to Communists. I said I had already alerted Department (cf. Embassy telegrams 2807 [1] and 2873) [2] on possibility that evacuation of Tonkin inhabitants might be judged necessary and that requests for aid in this connection could be expected to be forthcoming. I was careful to add, however, that I had not received any indication of what Washington thought or possibility of US aid in this regard.

Diem and his brother said most emphatically that they would not form a government unless they were certain French would refrain from giving up Tonkin. They had no intention as loyal Vietnamese nationalists to come into office merely to sign a capitulatory peace.

Diem said he thought it practically certain that Bao Dai would not return to Vietnam. If, as he seems to fear, French do sign a ceasefire and armistice, which would involve partition, and thus he backs out of forming a government, we should probably have an even more disintegrating situation to confront us in that Vietnam will have neither a ruler nor a responsible government at time when it needs both badly.

Although I gave Diem no encouragement to think that US would lend Vietnam diplomatic support vis-à-vis French Government, he will most certainly expect some indication of our position and will ask to see me on his return from Hanoi and Hue Friday.[3]

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[1] Dated June 17, p. 1718.

[2] Dated June 22, p. 1729.

[3] July 2.

If Department has any views which could be conveyed to Diem at that time either on requested representation or on possibility of US aid in mass evacuation from Tonkin, prompt instructions would be appreciated.

McClintock

751J.00/6-2954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET Saigon, June 29, 1954—10 p. m.

2933. Repeated information Paris 1042 Geneva 272, Vientiane, Bangkok, Phom Penh unnumbered. Prince Savang of Laos asked me to call on him this afternoon. He was accompanied by Prince Souvanna Phouma, Laotian Prime Minister. Savang said he wanted to inform me that at recent meeting of Laotian Cabinet presided over by his father, the King, (who departed today for Europe by sea) Laotian Government had taken decision not to recede in any degree from position which Laotian delegation had established initially at Geneva; namely, that Laos would insist on withdrawal of Viet Minh invaders from its soil and would not entertain thought of giving any concession to Communists. Prince Savang said that all blandishments of Chou-En-lai would be in vain so far as his government was concerned and he wanted US Government to be aware of Laotian resolve in this respect.

Savang said he was frankly suspicious of intentions of French Government and the purpose of his flight to Paris is to undertake a personal reconnaissance of French Government's thinking. Both he and Souvanna Phouma were fearful that in framework of a cease-fire or armistice covering Vietnam, present French Government might be willing to grant concessions to Viet Minh which would be injurious to Laotian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Savang said if French did arrive at any backstairs deal of this nature, he would publicly disavow any such arrangement and Laos would, if necessary, "fight on alone". Laos would in such event make an immediate appeal for United Nations intervention.

Savang said he would like assurances from US of American support, both moral and, if possible, material. However, he fully recognized there was no question of US military intervention in Indochina and agreed with me that if Secretary's announced policy of seeking to establish a base for "united action" within the framework of some collective security system for Southeast Asia could be achieved, this would more than satisfy Laotian desire for backing from US; nevertheless, both he and Souvanna Phouma felt that conditions have now so altered that if US is to continue to give military and economic aid in Indochina, and specifically to Laos, it should be done directly and not through the French channel.

Both Prince Savang and Souvanna Phouma said there was no possibility of latter's having contact with his half-brother and that there would be no arrangement for a coalition government with so-called Pathet-Laos elements.

I recommended to Savang that he get in touch with our Embassy in Paris on arrival as I thought it might be helpful for him to see Ambassador Dillon.

McClintock

751G.00/6-3054 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET

Hanoi, June 30, 1954—8 p. m.

775. Repeated information Saigon 717, Paris 344, pouched Bangkok unnumbered. In discussing current situation in north with me this morning, Governor Tri made no effort to minimize his deep discouragement and apprehension. He pointed out that he was convinced that French plans to abandon southern delta which had been made unilaterally without prior discussion with either himself or national government had been decided on as much as six weeks ago when French had first proposed hand over this area to Vietnamese National Army. In spite strong Vietnamese opposition to this proposal, Tri said French had persisted in basic objective of withdrawing from south and had now decided accomplish this objective in even more disastrous fashion. Tri said General Cogny came to see him June 26 to inform him of French plans withdraw from southern delta which had, according to Tri, then been under way for at least preceding four days. According to Tri, Cogny explained this movement as necessitated by military requirement of creating mobile striking force with which to meet possible assault Viet Minh battle corps. Tri protested grave political implications of giving up manpower and economic resources of this nationalist Catholic area. He asked Cogny why French Union forces in that area could not be made into mobile force, kept in area, and used there until needed to resist Viet Minh assault on Hanoi–Haiphong complex. Tri said he did not receive satisfactory reply to his question.

Tri informed national government and received twenty hours later telegram from Diem which, according to Tri, read as follows. "I have obtained from Salan a delay in French plans to evacuate Phat Diem, Bui Chu and Nam Dinh. Reassure the people." Language of telegram apparently deeply offended Tri. He felt, moreover, very strongly that it provided no basis for reassuring population in these areas. Tri sent a copy of this telegram to General Cogny who replied that he had received no instructions to delay French withdrawals which have continued.

Tri is convinced that withdrawals resulted from decisions made in Geneva and Paris and that Cogny is simply carrying out instructions. He said he is even more certain that whole operation is taking place within terms of agreement between French and Viet Minh. He sees present operation as prelude to general withdrawal of French Expeditionary Corps from delta.

Governor indicated he had instructed provincial officials, as well as militia and national guard, to remain these provinces until last minute. He was not sanguine about rear guard resistance these units could put up since French had withdrawn all automatic weapons and communications equipment. Tri said that he was receiving reports that large numbers of Vietnamese in French Union forces, including suppletifs, were refusing to leave with their units. These, he commented, were not desertions since the individuals were reporting to province chiefs with request that they be permitted to enter ranks Vietnamese National Army. According Tri, Cogny had agreed permit such "transfers" and he had informed province chiefs to accept these individuals.

Tri declared that it was more urgent than ever to know US attitude towards new Vietnamese Government and extent to which Vietnam could expect assistance, advice and equipment.

CAMERON

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 292

Record of a Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State, Wednesday, June 30, 1954, noon [1]

TOP SECRET

Participants:

The Secretary	Mr. Byroade [2]
The Under Secretary	Mr. Stelle
Mr. Robertson	Mr. Gullion
Mr. Bowie	Mr. Sturm
Mr. MacArthur	Mr. Tyler
Mr. Merchant	Mr. Draper

1. Replying to Mr. Robertson's question as to whether and to what extent the US would be willing *militarily* to support the settlement in Indochina, the Secretary stated that we would be willing to do so except that the French had refused to meet even some of our conditions or, for that matter, to make a request. He referred to Australian and New Zealand reluctance to associate themselves with us. Mr. Robertson

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[1] Drafting officer not identified. This memorandum was prepared on July 1.

[2] Henry A. Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs.

warned that the best opinion was agreed on the necessity of bolstering a settlement militarily in order to prevent the eventual complete loss of Indochina.

2. Mr. Bowie thought perhaps it was time to review the relevance of the US conditions and tell the French that before we will allow Indochina to be written off we will come to the assistance of the Associated States regardless of the French attitude. This would mean sending, if necessary, US ground forces. He developed at some length his thesis for placing the additional four divisions (as estimated in the Five-Power talks) across the Dong Hoi line.

3. The Under Secretary thought Mr. Bowie's views too extreme; the French, he pointed out, are preparing an orderly withdrawal from the delta which will then provide some strength in the south and Mendes-France is planning to ask for authority to send conscripts to Indochina. The real question, he said, is what we will do following the cease-fire. Mr. Bowie interjected that the Viet Minh will not be content with the terms of a settlement and will move ahead throughout the rest of Indochina if the French are not backed strongly.

4. The Secretary said that Bonnet had called him this morning with a message from Mendes-France asking for a reply (see *Aide-mémoire*) as to whether the US would use its influence with Laos and Cambodia in getting them to accept a French-Viet Minh settlement. The Secretary told Bonnet it is difficult to use our good offices blindly without knowing what the settlement would be but that if it were within the terms outlined in our reply to the French, perhaps we would not say anything.[3] It was generally agreed that we should not throw away our last negotiating lever with a precipitate agreement to the French request.

5. Two suggestions were discussed but left in abeyance because the real problem still remains:

(1) Mr. Merchant's idea of a public declaration that "on the assumption Laotian and Cambodian independence is respected and that some part of Vietnam is left intact and politically whole, we would regard any move across the lines drawn in such a settlement as an act of aggression to which the United States might react militarily." (It was pointed out that the Communists would be willing to join in the declaration, a sort of guarantee by the Geneva powers, and yet could get what they wanted.)

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[3] Telegram 24 to Paris, July 2, repeated to Geneva as Tosec 510 and to Saigon as telegram 24, read as follows: "FYI Bonnet July 1 phoned Secretary with message from Mendès-France asking for reply to that part Bonnet's *aide-mémoire* July [*June*] 26 concerning whether US would use its influence with Vietnamese with view persuading them accept a French-Viet Minh cease fire agreement.

"Secretary told Bonnet we could not take a position for or against any such undertaking since we do not know precisely provisions of agreement." (751G.00/7-254)

For the text of the French *aide-mémoire*, see telegram 4852 to Paris, June 28, p. 1755; for the U.S.-U.K. reply, see telegram 4853 to Paris, June 28, p. 1757.

(2) Mr. Byroade suggested publicizing a US troop movement to the Philippines (perhaps through the planned redeployment of US troops from Korea).

6. The Secretary said he thought the UK would water down its reply to the French *Aide-mémoire* but that the UK would be willing to help protect a settlement along the lines outlined in the US–UK reply.

7. The Secretary said it was difficult to agree to Mr. Bowie's thesis involving the sending of US divisions into Indochina. Mr. Bowie reiterated that the loss of Indochina will be a terrible blow to US prestige throughout the world. The Secretary said, however, that Asian and European public opinion would be unanimous in opposition. The operation, he added, would be similar to what we did in World War II in fighting the French in Casablanca so that we could then fight the Germans. We need a better case for Congressional and public opinion.

What he would like to do, the Secretary said, and what he has been trying unsuccessfully to achieve for over four years, is to play a game of tit-for-tat with the Communists, e.g., when the Commies grab land we grab some from them. For example, he would like to take over Hainan Island if the Chinese move over their present boundaries. This, he said, would produce a real scare in the Communist world.

8. Mr. Robertson said that our real trump card is the fact that the Commies are uncertain and worried over US intentions and what our posture might be in reaction to further Communist aggression. He thought that if we supported the French diplomatically we could get a rather acceptable settlement. Mr. Phleger said that this might produce Communist intransigence and thus prolong the war. Mr. Robertson said that this would be better from the US point of view because US public and Congressional opinion could then be more easily convinced of the necessity for intervention.

9. Mr. Bowie said, and Messrs. Phleger and Robertson agreed, that we ought to give the Australians and New Zealanders a better and more specific idea of our intentions, with the thought in mind that their reaction to a square proposal would be far from craven.

The meeting closed with a discussion of the British attitude which, according to the Secretary, leans [more] strongly in favor of a settlement in Indochina than do [*does*] the French.

751G.00/6–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, June 30, 1954—7 p. m.

5117. Repeated information Saigon 634, Geneva 449. Department limit distribution. Eyes only McClintock Saigon, Johnson Geneva.

Jebb came to see me this morning after his interview with Mendes-France in the course of which he delivered reply to French *aide-mémoire* of June 26 (Deptel 4853) [1] in the form of *aide-mémoire*, followed by verbal comments along lines outlined in paragraph 2 reference telegram.

Jebb reported that Mendes was pleased with text reply and stated that Parodi would give us definite French position in day or so. Mendes also confirmed that negotiations with Viet Minh at Geneva were stalled (Geneva Secto 544, repeated Paris as 519).[2]

Mendes was somewhat perplexed by reference to "line running generally west from Dong Hoi" as possible partition line for while Dong Hoi is approximately at 17.5 degrees French had been holding out for 18th parallel in face Viet Minh wanting 13th.

On question of elections, Jebb quoted Mendes as stating that the Viet Minh wanted them to be held in six months but that the French were taking the position that they should be delayed for a year after final settlement and withdrawal of troops had been achieved. This, as presently envisaged, would mean a year and half to two years from now.

As reported Embtel 5099,[3] we delivered reply to *aide-mémoire* to Foreign Office this morning.

DILLON

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[1] Dated June 28, p. 1757.

[2] Telegram Secto 544 from Geneva, June 29, reporting a lack of progress in negotiations between the French and the Viet Minh, is not printed. (396.1 GE/6–2954)

[3] See footnote 3, p. 1757.

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Gullion"

Memorandum by Edmund A. Gullion [1] to the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] June 30, 1954.

Subject: Further French Defeat in Vietnam [2]

At Ankhe, far down the coast of Annam, the French have just suffered their third greatest defeat in Indochina—after Dien Bien Phu, and Cao Bong-Langson (1950/51).

They have lost over a thousand men, including their two Korea battalions, over a hundred trucks, some guns and munitions. This is by far the biggest reverse they have ever known in the South.

It does not augur well for building a strong South Vietnam. It shows Viet Minh regulars in strength and an *irregular* strength greater than supposed and still growing.

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[1] Member of the Policy Planning Staff.

[2] Telegram 2928 from Saigon, June 29, reported the destruction in central Vietnam of Groupe Mobile 100, consisting mainly of the two French battalions which had served in Korea. (751G.00/6–2954)

It may enable the Viet Minh to demand an enclave in the South, here or at Hui, or Can Tho, in exchange for Haiphong. This can only mean that the Communists will eventually dominate in the *South* as in the North.

751G.00/6–2254 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy at Saigon[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, July 1, 1954—1:44 p. m.

8. Saigon's 2873 rptd Paris 1021 Geneva 259 Hanoi unn.[2] If Vietnamese authorities inquire possibility US assistance evacuating sizable elements civilian population Tonkin you should say that if the question were to arise on emergency basis as result of continuing military operations, as distinct from peaceful settlement by which Tonkin would be left in Viet Minh hands, we assume evacuation would have to be by sea or air and that under these circumstances it would in fact be most unlikely that sea or air transportation facilities which we would have available or be able to assemble in time would suffice for movement of any sizable number. For your information all available shipping would presumably have to be used for troops and next priority accorded to French and selected residents delta.

Re fifth paragraph your 2932 rptd Paris 1041, Geneva 271,[3] if Geneva talks result in agreement which would permit peaceful mass evacuation Tonkin population we assume arrangements would encompass means whereby evacuation would be accomplished and that some of people would move overland. See in this connection item 6 of communication to French Government set forth Deptel 4853 to Paris rptd Saigon 2748.[4]

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Day of PSA. Repeated for information to Hanoi as telegram 5, to Paris as 1, to Geneva as telegram Tosec 502, and to Manila for the Manila Liaison Group as 8.

[2] Dated June 22, p. 1729.

[3] Dated June 29, p. 1762.

[4] Dated June 28, p. 1757.

751J.00/7–154 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 1, 1954—9 p. m.

[Received 2:04 p. m.]

10. Repeated information Paris 4, Geneva 2, Vientiane, Phnom Penh, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Prince Savang of Laos lunched

with me today. He said that he had undertaken a personal reconnaissance of that area of Laos allegedly held by "Pathet-Lao people's government" in last four weeks and could assure me that with exception of a small band of Viet Minh troops country was empty of insurgent and invading elements. He said specifically that Prince Souphanouvong, who had during last year occupied a cave 18 kilometers distant from Sam Neua, was now practically a prisoner in Vinh and had for some months been physically absent from that portion of Laos claimed to be held in rebel hands.

Prince Savang said that he had 1500 Maquis inside Sam Neua province and could at any time he desired take Sam Neua town. However, he did not wish to provoke Viet Minh reprisals since with French military decision to concentrate forces in limited Hanoi Haiphong perimeter of Tonkin Laos would not be able to repel a full dress Viet Minh invasion down Nam Hou Valley toward Luang Prabang "without outside aid".

Prince Savang said that Viet Minh battalions in Laos receive their rice and munitions by overland supply from China. He added significantly that Laos was key to so called "Thai confederation" and that Lingua Franca of Yunnan even as far as border of Szechuen was Laotian. He said "if they capture Royal Family of Laos, they can control Thais from Yunnan to Thailand and Burma".

Prince Savang said that he was ordering Ouret to return to Washington, as being more useful there at this juncture, and that he was instructing Foreign Minister to return to Vientiane from Geneva. I made observation, however, that it would be useful for Laos to have some accredited representative in Geneva in event that a cease-fire and armistice affecting Vietnam should likewise bear upon Laos. Savang said he was fully aware of this possibility and that he would control instructions to Laotian delegation in Geneva in person but that he would not go to Geneva himself.

I said re Prince's information concerning insignificance of "Pathet Lao movement" it seemed to me essential that his government make known to world true proportions of this alleged rebel movement and requested his permission that our media indicate these dimensions. Prince Savang said he would be very pleased if in fact truth were made known.

Although it would indeed be useful if facts set forth second paragraph this telegram [1] could be made public, is recommended that they not be published by USIA media as thus becoming suspect. It seems to me that possibly via Thailand, Burma, or even Philippines, this intelligence might be made available to world news agencies.

As Department knows, Savang is given to sweeping statements and an optimism bordering on euphoria. However, there is no reason why he should not be used in valuable live interview on arrival at Paris to repeat foregoing statements to world press which we in turn could use to our own advantage at Geneva.

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[1] In telegram 12 from Saigon, July 2, McClintock indicated that he meant to refer here to the first main paragraph. (751J.00/7-254)

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/6–3054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, July 1, 1954—2:30 p. m.

5. Reference Saigon's 2932 and 2949, Hanoi's 772, 774, 775 and 778.[2] While we are aware of possibly insurmountable obstacles in way of any wholesale evacuation, especially in relation to problem of Tonkin as a whole, we should like to be reassured that what can be done to provide for safety of non-communist population of North Vietnam is in fact being done.

Ambassador Dillon should invite Mendes-France's attention again to numbered paragraph 6 of note transmitted Deptel 4853[3] and refer to Diem's protest to Chargé Saigon re current French evacuation south zone of Delta. He should say we are concerned with fate of population of Bui Chu and Phat Diem, and that their abandonment to Vietminh would have unfortunate repercussions here and direct bearing on whether we can respect any armistice achieved by Mendes-France. Dillon should inquire what precisely are French intentions for this area.

Chargé Saigon should inform Diem of our concern and say we have requested clarification from French.

Ambassador Johnson should refer to newspaper accounts of unmolested French military withdrawal this zone and ask Chauvel whether it results from Franco–Vietminh agreement or understanding.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Sturm of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as telegram 11 and to Geneva as Tosec 503. Repeated for information to Hanoi as telegram 7.

[2] The reference telegrams reported aspects of the French withdrawal from areas of northern Vietnam. For telegram 2932 from Saigon, June 29, see p. 1762; for telegram 775 from Hanoi, June 30, see p. 1765; telegrams 2949 from Saigon and 772, 774, and 778 from Hanoi, all June 30, are not printed.

[3] Dated June 28, p. 1757.

751G.00/7–254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 2, 1954—6 p. m.

20. Repeated information Paris 10, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Feeling is already becoming manifest in Vietnamese circles Saigon of

more overt hatred of French specifically and of Americans and Occidentals generally as news filters through of French "military decision" to withdraw from southeastern provinces of Tonkin with inevitable corollary of eventual relinquishment of Hanoi. For example, a prominent Vietnamese doctor told me this morning that although people of Cochinchina were certainly not as a rule on very friendly terms with Tonkinese they nevertheless felt in this time of national peril a bond of sympathy for the northerners who are now being abandoned by the French. He added that Vietnamese would if possible "turn against the French" and warned that Americans likewise would be looked upon askance. As for chances of forming a new Vietnam following partition, this possibility seemed dubious since he claimed attentistes and intellectuals had been careful to keep their skirts free of regional sectarian groups and would probably instead advocate a government which in fact would be dominated by Viet Minh.

Although as suggested Embtel 18 repeated Paris 9, Geneva 4, Hanoi 5 [1] today it seems that Diem may now be more inclined to form a government, I should think that if he does not create a workable Cabinet soon we should give some thought to possibility (possibly utilization of last remnant of French influence here) of bringing in a government headed by Tam. At least, as indicated last sentence Embtel 2946 repeated Paris 1048 June 30 [2] he has no hesitancy in knocking heads together and with his past experience both as Prime Minister and Minister of Interior he might indeed be able to create a resistance government worthy of our support.

McCLINTOCK

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[1] Telegram 18 from Saigon, July 2, not printed, reported on the views of Ngo Dinh Diem as expressed to French officials. (751G.00/7-254)

[2] Telegram 2946 from Saigon, June 30, reporting on a conversation with former Premier Tam, is not printed. (751G.00/6-3054)

751G.5 MSP/7-254 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 2, 1954—7 p. m.

25. Repeated information Hanoi 7. For some time past both Embassy and MAAG have vigorously pressed with French matter of supplying arms to Governor Tri's militia with little result as set forth in Hanoi's reports. Problem has developed into all too familiar pattern where Governor Tri appeals to Consulate and Embassy, MAAG and Embassy put pressure on French, French promise action, and Tri still does not get his guns.

After so many unproductive approaches to French, MAAG and Embassy now believe that matter rests between French and Tri and that question has moved from one of straight supply of equipment to political problem where we are faced with apparent French decision to withhold arms. With deteriorating situation in north and with withdrawal of French forces from large areas of delta to limited defense perimeter, it will be increasingly difficult to argue against possible French contention that rifles now delivered to militia will probably soon fall into Viet Minh hands.

In light of above, Embassy and MAAG believe it unwise to further pressure French on the matter.

McClintock

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"

Draft Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President [1]

TOP SECRET [Washington, undated.]

1. We have outlined to the French the terms of an agreement on Indochina which we could respect. I think we can be certain that in presenting the same terms the British have made it clear to the French that they would be satisfied with less. I am afraid we have to expect that the French will not succeed in getting our terms from the Communists.

2. If no new element is added to the situation, it seems almost certain that the kind of agreement which the French will make with the Communists will involve neutralization of Laos and Cambodia, and political arrangements with respect to Vietnam which will assure a subsequent rapid takeover of that country by the Communists. We should be clear in our own minds that the kind of a settlement we can expect will inevitably lead to the early communization of all of Indochina.

3. Such an outcome will dangerously increase Communist appetite for further expansion; dangerously decrease the will and capacity of the remaining free states of Southeast Asia to resist such expansion; bring heavy political and economic pressure on Japan for a shift from its present policy of cooperation with us, and lead to defeatism in and recriminations among the United States and its Allies, particularly France and the UK.

4. We have up to now set conditions for US intervention which included prior agreement to act with us on the part of at least some of our major Allies. In the face of the present probability of the loss of all Indochina, and the consequences of that loss, I believe we should

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[1] By covering memorandum of July 2, Robert R. Bowie, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, transmitted this draft to Under Secretary Smith, Murphy, Drumright, Merchant, Phleger, and MacArthur as a vehicle for resolving the issue of what action to take in regard to Indochina. A notation by O'Connor on the source text indicates that it was seen by Secretary Dulles. There is no evidence, however, that this paper was transmitted to the President.

review our policy. It is clear that the UK will not now agree to put forces into Indochina. It is clear that without UK agreement neither Australia nor New Zealand will give prior agreement to cooperate in intervention. If we are going to act, our initial decision must be on the basis of acting alone.

5. But if at this point, in the light of our present recognition that we cannot at best save more than a part of Indochina, if at this point we were prepared to tell the French and the Communists that we would if necessary use US forces to prevent loss to Communism of at least that part of Indochina which lies South of the line Thak Kek-Dong Hoi, I believe such a statement would have an effect on the French, on the Communists, and our Allies which would radically alter the situation.

6. The French of course want a settlement very badly. But they are eager to salvage something out of Indochina. Their own honor and prestige and the future of the French Union are involved. Vietnam is one of their principal overseas customers and they have cherished cultural institutions in South Vietnam. The French are anxious not to do anything which will lessen the major economic and political benefits which they get from their connection with us. US assurance that it would support negotiations to preserve the Southern part of Indochina, and if necessary would use US forces to preserve that area would instill confidence in the French that they could secure such a settlement from the Communists, and would fortify them in their negotiation for such a settlement. I believe the French would stay with us on this position.

7. I also believe that the Communists would agree to a settlement which would leave the South free, if they were convinced that the alternative was the introduction of US forces and a possibility of an expanded war. The Communists would in fact be getting about all they probably expected to get when the Geneva Conference began. They have repeatedly shown that they do not want a war at this time. I think there is every chance that a revival of their concern over the possibility of US intervention would lead them to accept what would be in fact an at least temporary partition of Indochina.

8. Our other Allies might not immediately join in a threat to use force to preserve the South. If our threat brought a settlement they would, however, be prepared to include the South of Indochina in a collective defense zone. And even if a settlement is not reached, I myself believe, that we would have active support from some of them immediately, and eventually from all of them.

9. We should not, of course, ignore the dangers that such a course would involve. Even though I believe that the French would stay with us, and that the Communists would accept our terms, we would

have to be prepared, if things did not turn out that way, to take whatever action was necessary to keep the South of Indochina out of Communist hands. This might, if the French caved in completely, involve assisting the local governments while the French stood aside. And it might also mean that we would be fighting the Communists to maintain a line across the waist of Indochina although the risks of this would be considerably less than would be involved in US intervention in Tonkin.

10. I believe, however, that a US decision that if necessary it would use US forces to prevent the loss of Southern Indochina, and that if necessary it would act alone, would have every prospect of bringing the Communists to agreement, and of securing the support and cooperation of the French and eventually of our other Allies. The possibility of such a decision may not exist for many more days. Either negotiations between the French and the Communists, or local developments in Indochina, may in the next week or two, so transform the situation that US intervention would be clearly impracticable.

11. We are faced, probably for the last time, with a choice between the risks involved in threatening and if necessary undertaking US military intervention, or the probable loss of all of Indochina. I believe the prospects of success without a conflict and without harm to our Alliances are sufficient to justify us in deciding now to make use of the threat of employment of US force.

751G.00/7–254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, July 2, 1954—8 p.m.

32. Repeated information Geneva 2, Saigon 4. Re Deptels 5 and 8.[1] I took up reference telegrams with Mendes this afternoon. Regarding present withdrawals in the delta Mendes said that these had been planned in May by the Laniel government and he had made no change in the original plan. The withdrawals represent a definite shortening of the French lines to protect Hanoi, Haiphong and the connecting road.

He said he had been much surprised to read in the papers that a State Department spokesman had said that the US had not had prior information regarding these withdrawals. He had assumed, he said, that Ely had fully informed O'Daniel of his plans. He then accordingly asked Ely this morning if that was not the case and Ely had told him that he had not informed O'Daniel. Mendes accordingly offered his apologies and said that he had instructed Ely in the future to keep O'Daniel fully informed on the spot.

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[1] Both dated July 1, p. 1772 and vol. xvi, p. 1270, respectively.

Regarding withdrawals themselves he said they were necessary to ensure the safety of the French Expeditionary Corps. He said that the French had offered to take with them those members of the local population who desired protection and that the French forces had provided transportation for such people. He said he had not seen the latest figures but a fairly substantial number of people had availed themselves of this opportunity. On the other hand, there had been many who preferred to stay where they were.

In this connection he said that since Dien Bien Phu the Viet Minh had not conducted reprisals when they occupied new territory but had behaved very well toward the local population. He said that he realized that this might only be a temporary policy to facilitate negotiations at Geneva, but that for whatever it was worth, it was the fact. He then said that the withdrawals were not yet completed and showed me on a rough map where further withdrawals were scheduled. These include the Phu Ly area and a portion of the area to the west of Hanoi.

Regarding the right of population transfer as contained in paragraph 6 of Deptel 4853,[2] Mendes said that he was thoroughly in accord that this would be a good thing from the French point of view. He said that it had been mentioned to the Viet Minh in Geneva and that they had made no answer either favorable or unfavorable. When I reiterated the importance that we attach to this subject, Mendes made a note of it and said that he was writing Chauvel tonight and would include in his letter of instruction a reference to this subject. I think it would be useful if Johnson would stress this subject in his next talk with Chauvel.

Mendes then said negotiations in Geneva had been at a standstill and that he had instructed Chauvel to go to Berne for two days to show that the French were in no greater hurry than the Viet Minh. He said that the Soviet representative at Geneva had told Chauvel not to worry about the slow pace of the negotiations as at conferences such as these everything was always settled in last few hours.

Regarding Deptel 8, use of word "withdrawal" was intended only to mean deployment into agreed regroupment areas. Mendes said that the French on timing of election are holding out for 18 months after completion of regrouping which, he said, would mean 22 or 23 months after cease-fire. Viet Minh are asking for elections six months after cease-fire. Mendes expects the final result will be a compromise somewhere in between.

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[2] Dated June 28, p. 1757.

He then commented that Diem had made an unhelpful speech the other day in Saigon when he was quoted as having said that he was in favor of the elections within a year. Mendes thinks that this is too soon and not in the interests of Vietnam, and it runs counter to what the French were trying to obtain at Geneva.

DILLON

651.51G/7–754

Memorandum for the Record, by Captain George W. Anderson, Jr., USN, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford)[1]

TOP SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] 2 July 1954.

On Friday afternoon, 2 July, General Valluy, accompanied by General Stehlin,[2] called on Admiral Radford. The purpose of the visit was to report to Admiral Radford the conversations by General Stehlin and General Ely during General Stehlin's visit to Paris.

General Stehlin said that General Ely had sent his very best regards to Admiral Radford. He stated that General Ely was a very unhappy man in the light of the present situation at Geneva and in Indo-China.

General Ely had returned from Indo-China to Paris primarily to ascertain the position of the new French government with respect to Indo-China, and to obtain needed reinforcements for Indo-China. He had not participated in any of the negotiations with the Viet Minh as these were entirely in the hands of the politicians.

General Ely desired that Admiral Radford know that the regrouping of the French forces in the Tonkin Delta was being accomplished with the sole object of improving the military security of the French Union Forces in the Delta to take care of any eventuality resulting from the negotiations at Geneva. This regrouping was well underway and would serve to provide the French badly needed mobile groups for use in the Delta area. He hoped that he would be able to hold Hanoi but was not certain of this in the event that the Viet Minh elected to launch a major attack.

General Ely envisaged that the negotiations at Geneva might lead to a partition of Viet Nam along the line south of the Tonkin Delta. However, General Ely recognized the necessity for having reinforcements regardless of how the situation at Geneva went. He had obtained a commitment from the present government to press for authority from the French Assembly to send the first of the newly formed divisions to Indo-China leaving France about 20 July. Since this would involve the assignment to Indo-China of conscripts, it was recognized that this was a very delicate decision. The present government of France supported the move. What the decision of the Assembly might be would not be known until next week.

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[1] On July 7, Scott of the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State circulated this memorandum to the following individuals: Under Secretary Smith, Murphy, MacArthur, Merchant, Drumright, and Beam (S/P).

[2] Maj. Gen. Paul Stehlin, French Air Force, deputy to the chief of the French Military Mission in Washington.

General Stehlin informed Admiral Radford that General Ely was very anxious for the United States to take over the training responsibilities as proposed by General Ely to General O'Daniel. General Ely was aware of the factors which precluded the United States from making a decision to accept this responsibility at the present time. Admiral Radford explained to General Stehlin that he did not feel that he was justified in making any recommendation for the United States to assume such responsibilities in the present obscure situation. The United States was unaware of what the future might hold, and therefore Admiral Radford could not justify any expansion of U.S. activities in Indo-China for the present.

General Stehlin said that General Ely was getting along very well with General O'Daniel and that General O'Daniel was of assistance to him. He hoped that General O'Daniel might soon be promoted to the rank of lieutenant general which he had given up when he first went to Indo-China. Admiral Radford stated that this was another matter on which he was not yet prepared to make any positive recommendation until it was more apparent as to what the situation would be in Indo-China after the Geneva Conference.

In response to a query posed by Admiral Radford to General Valluy regarding General Valluy's statement to the Five Power Military Conference in Washington on ultimate defense lines in the event the Tonkin Delta was lost, General Valluy stated in substance as follows: He did not envisage that it was reasonable to expect the establishment of a good defense position in the event that the Tonkin Delta was lost. The logistic situation, particularly as regards to lines of communications, would be difficult even though a sufficient number of troops could be made available, which in his opinion was doubtful, to hold such a line.

Admiral Radford pointed out the particularly complicating factor in Indo-China at the present time due to the virtual non-existence of a Vietnamese government. He stated that it appeared to him that the Vietnamese were without any effective leadership and this was contributing to the deterioration of morale which was already low, due to the worsening of the military situation. General Valluy agreed that the situation with respect to the Vietnamese government was very bad.

General Stehlin stated that he and General Valluy had accompanied the French Ambassador to the United States to Westover Field, Massachusetts, to see the first plane carrying wounded from Indo-

China enroute to France. Both General Stehlin and General Valluy expressed their admiration for the manner in which the United States Air Force was handling this mission, and their appreciation for the excellent care which the French wounded were receiving.

751G.00/6–3054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, July 3, 1954—1:36 p.m.

51. In addition specific concerns set forth Deptels 5 and 8[2] we are increasingly disturbed by lack information re Indochina negotiations as a whole and lack of adequate consultation re French military plans. For example current military withdrawal from Southern Delta, whether based on some understanding with Viet Minh (as circumstantial evidence indicates) or not (as French maintain), being carried out by French without our being notified prior July 1 (Saigon 9).[3] Much more involved here than mere military deployment for timing and manner such operations have extensive political implications.[4]

With French perhaps using some six channels of negotiation (Mendes direct, Chauvel, open military Geneva, underground military Geneva, open military Indochina, and underground Indochina), we fear that in spite French claim that negotiations currently stalled, secret discussions are in fact going on which may result in understandings and agreements which French consider meet our criteria but we could not respect.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Tyler and Fisher of WE. Repeated for information to Saigon as telegram 39, to Geneva as telegram Tosec 517. and to Hanoi as telegram 16.

[2] Both dated July 1, p. 1772 and vol. xvi, p. 1270, respectively.

[3] Telegram 9 from Saigon, July 1, not printed, described a briefing of Embassy officials by French military authorities regarding the evacuation of areas of northern Vietnam which had already occurred. (251G.1122/7–154)

[4] In telegram 40 from Paris, July 4, Ambassador Dillon contended that Premier Mendès-France was doing everything in his power to keep the United States informed. (751G.00/7–454) He further reported in telegrams 73 and 81 of July 7 that the French had notified U.S. military officials at Paris in advance of the withdrawals in Tonkin. Indeed, said Dillon, the State Department had been informed in telegram 4605 of May 30 (p. 1636). (751G.00/7–754)

751G.00/7–354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, July 3, 1954—1:49 p.m.

52. Eyes only for Ambassador from Secretary. We are considering here what position we should take as regards the French negotiations

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State.

in Indochina. These negotiations appear to have gone underground and we have little reliable knowledge of what is really in the minds of the French Government or what is likely to emerge. We have ourselves agreed with the British on the 7 points previously communicated to you.[2] However, we have the distinct impression that the British look upon this merely as an optimum solution and that they would not encourage the French to hold out for a solution as good as this. Indeed, during the talks here the British wanted to express these 7 points merely as a "hope" without any indication of firmness on our part. The word "respect" was agreed on as a compromise. The fact is however that the US would not want to be associated in any way with a settlement which fell materially short of the 7 point memorandum.

We fear the French may in fact without prior consultation with us of more than perfunctory character agree to a settlement which though superficially resembling the 7 points will in fact contain such political clauses and restrictions that Laos, Cambodia, and Southern Vietnam will almost surely fall in a few months under Communist control. No doubt such a solution would be accepted with satisfaction by the French people and parliament who would rejoice in the ending of the fighting and close their eyes to the possible future implications of the settlement. At this point the US may be asked as one of the powers which convoked and participated in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference to sign or otherwise adhere to the settlement. Also the Communists may insist upon this and take the position that if we did not do so that would be a violation of the understanding upon which the armistice was negotiated and they might even threaten to withdraw their armistice terms if the US did not adhere to them. This Communist tactic would well serve their purpose of creating animosity between France and the US at a time when the defeat of EDC is a major Soviet objective.

We are giving consideration to various possibilities such as the withdrawal of the remnants of our delegation from Geneva or clarification of our position as regards the French position. This latter matter would not serve the desired purpose unless it were public and if it were public it might be looked upon as a threat which would create the French antagonistic reaction which we want to avoid.

Possibly you could find out whether or not there is the danger which we apprehend and whether or not the French are negotiating on the assumption that we may not be a party to the settlement. If the French are operating on this basis and if they know that the Communists also accept this premise, the situation is not dangerous. If either or both French and Communists are operating on assumption we will adhere to any settlement they agree to, then we may be headed for serious trouble. I would like your personal thoughts on this matter.

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[2] See telegram 4853 to Paris, June 28, p. 1757.

DULLES

751G.00/7–454 : Telegram

The Chargé at Saigon (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 4, 1954—1 p. m.

48. Repeated information Paris 20 Geneva 10 Hanoi Bangkok unnumbered. Prime Minister designate Diem asked me to see him last night upon his return from Hanoi and Hue. His brother Nhu had likewise just returned from Hanoi and both were in a highly emotional state.

Diem said that he had made a formal protest to General Salan in Hanoi against evacuation of the three southern provinces of Tonkin. He said that Salan had refused to receive him or to entertain his formal protest for a delay of 12 hours on grounds that "military secrecy" must not be impaired. It was only afer this delay that Salan, having accomplished a *fait accompli*, received the Prime Minister designate and listened to his by then fruitless demand that the evacuation be stopped.

Diem said repeatedly throughout our conversation he was convinced French intend to evacuate Hanoi. I made no comment other than to point to General Ely's statement on leaving Paris that he intended to fight to hold delta, adding that our own military felt that shortening of Tonkin defense perimeter was advantageous from defense point of view. There is no doubt, however, that Diem is convinced French plan eventual withdrawal from all of Tonkin except possibly Haiphong enclave.

Brother Nhu who had spent an extra day in Hanoi was even more envenomed with hatred for the French as the result of his meeting with the Bishop of Phat Diem. According to Nhu's account, populace of Phat Diem on June 30 had gone to beachhead for evacuation when suddenly Bishop returned to Phat Diem by air in a forlorn attempt to rally militia to a last fight. Populace then returned to town but when Bishop saw that it was not possible to conduct an effective resistance he then told people to proceed to beachhead for evacuation. Crowd approached beachhead which was guarded by a French fort placed before a bridge on road leading to river. At this point French fort refused crowd access to bridge. Vietnamese militia then fired on fort with result commander of fort called on French Air to bomb the throng with heavy casualties. Nhu at one point said 10,000 were killed and at another point 20,000. In his highly overwrought state it is difficult to judge accuracy of this account and I suggest we hold judgment in abeyance until we have had an opportunity to check.

Nhu also said most of civil population were unable to escape from Nam Dinh as French had commandeered all motor transport and French [apparent omission] of trucks would not accept refugee passengers except upon payment of 100 piasters bribe per head.

Whether these stories are true or not fact remains that two men charged with forming new Government of Vietnam are at an almost insane pitch of hatred against French. How necessary cooperation can be worked out between French Military Command which is sole bulwark against an immediate capitulation to Viet Minh and these passionately envenomed civil leaders will be no mean job.

Diem said that he had decided to form a government despite all obstacles and that he would commence that very night in consultation with prospective ministers. He asked if we had any objection to General Xuan whom he had called back from France to serve as a counselor. I said that this Embassy refrained from comment on Vietnamese personal ties and that all we wanted to see was a strong and able government formed as quickly as possible.

Repeatedly during conversation the brothers said that everything depended on American aid. Diem said that both in Hanoi and Haiphong populace thronged upon him asking what assistance he was bringing from America. I said that at this bitter hour I did not wish to take refuge in juridical arguments but that both brothers could understand that United States could scarcely commit itself in Vietnam without knowing policies either of newly formed Mendes-France Government or of as yet unformed Diem Government. Furthermore, of conditions laid down wisely by Secretary as set out in his Los Angeles speech regarding possibility of United States participating in united action here, none of these conditions had yet been met.

Diem showed a curious blend of heroism mixed with a narrowness of view and of egotism which will make him a difficult man to deal with. He said that only his presence in Hanoi had prevented populace from stampeding and that his arrival in Hanoi had been welcomed as that of a saviour. In one breath he criticized French for criticizing Bao Dai and then said that Bao Dai should never return to Vietnam as his life would be in danger. He said advisors in Hanoi had cautioned him not even to mention Bao Dai's name as this would be prejudicial to Diem's own chances of gaining necessary adherents.

Diem is a messiah without a message. His only formulated policy is to ask immediate American assistance in every form including refugee relief, training of troops and armed military intervention.

His only present emotion, other than a lively appreciation of himself, is a blind hatred for the French.[1]

McClintock

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[1] McClintock added the following in telegram 63 from Saigon, July 5:

"My British colleague informs me that unsolicited opinions reaching his Mission are unanimous in indicating that Diem is regarded as 'being in the American pocket.' I said our pocket was much too small for such a requirement, and that Diem was not an American candidate or champion. I likewise told Graves that Diem's only 'policy' was based on hope of American aid, but that I had assumed ungrateful task of spelling out to him conditions established by the Secretary as prerequisite to US participation in united action here." (751G.00/7–554)

751G.00/7–454: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET   Paris, July 4, 1954—3 p. m.

41. Eyes only Secretary. Reference Deptel 52.[1] I can well understand difficulties we face as described in reference telegram. I feel that French position is fairly clear as of now but difficulty may well arise in last days or hours of conference after Ministers have returned to Geneva.

In that connection we face following problem. If we withdraw delegation from Geneva we lose all possibility of influencing French to stand firm, and we also throw away whatever restraining influence we may still have on Communist delegations. French would feel abandoned and, with only Eden to advise, would undoubtedly accept a result more favorable to the Communists than if we stayed at Geneva. The same effect but to a lesser extent would result if neither Under Secretary nor you return to Geneva for closing negotiations.

On the other hand even if we do maintain a full delegation at Geneva headed by you or Under Secretary there is always the possibility and maybe even probability that French will accept a settlement that does not fully accord with 7 points in US–UK agreement. This will be particularly apt to happen if Eden does not stand firm in final negotiations.

I do not feel that public statement of our position would be helpful as it would create the antagonism mentioned in next to last paragraph of reference telegram.

Even if we do not consider final settlement satisfactory to us, I feel that unless we agree not to use force to upset it we will be in an untenable position here vis-à-vis Soviet and neutralist propaganda that will picture US as the nation which by its acts clearly shows that it wants war.

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[1] Dated July 3, p. 1780.

Mendes is fully conscious that we may feel that we cannot be a party to the settlement. However, I do not feel that this would necessarily weigh very heavily with him in final settlement, particularly if he can obtain Eden's support. Naturally I have no idea what is in mind of Communists on this score.

We have one strong card which so far we have apparently not cared to use. That is we can trade willingness to give full diplomatic support to French in their effort to sell settlement to Vietnam in return for a settlement that we can support. The indication which French now have that no matter what the settlement may be, we cannot be counted upon for support with Vietnam obviously greatly weakens our influence with French.

In conclusion if we base our actions solely on the attempt to get the best possible settlement I feel that we should (1) maintain our delegation at Geneva, (2) have you or the Under Secretary return to head the delegation when the other Foreign Ministers return, (3) tell the French at once that we will support them in selling settlement to Vietnam provided that settlement is satisfactory to us, (4) maintain close contact with and pressure on Eden so he sticks to 7 points US–UK agreement.

I fully realize that domestic political considerations must also be taken into account, but I am not in a position to evaluate them so I have confined these thoughts to a description of the best method available to US to influence the final settlement at Geneva in the direction we desire.

DILLON

751G.00/7–654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, July 6, 1954—1 p. m.

50. Repeated information London 11, Saigon 8, Geneva 4. Re Deptel 4853.[1] Parodi this morning gave me French reaction to US–UK terms for Indochina settlement. He said the terms generally parallel present French position and are welcomed by French Government. However, they have one important reservation in that they consider that paragraphs 4 and 5 may be mutually contradictory.

French feel that eventual agreement will have to contain provisions for elections which would comply with paragraph 5 of US–UK agreement. However, if elections should go wrong way, this would seem to contradict paragraph 4 of US–UK agreement, which says there should be no political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area.

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[1] Dated June 28, p. 1757.

Accordingly, they request clarification from us as to US and UK position regarding elections.

In addition Parodi said that French do not fully understand what we mean when we say we would be willing to "respect" agreement. Parodi said that the word "respect" seemed weak and unclear and French would like clarification if at all possible.

DILLON

751G.00/7–654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, July 6, 1954—11 p. m.

66. Repeated information Geneva 8, Saigon 11. After finishing discussion of Kerr article,[1] Mendes said that the second major thing which he wished to discuss with me was the question of the resumption of the Geneva talks at the Ministerial level. He said that it was now clear that the Ministers would have to make the decisions as the technical committees had been unsuccessful. Therefore, and in view of his July 20 deadline, he personally hoped that Ministerial discussions could commence as soon as possible.

In this connection he mentioned a report that Molotov might return to Geneva on July 8. He said that Chauvel had tried to confirm this with the Russians at Geneva but they replied that they were without information. Mendes said he very much did not want to be in a position of talking at Geneva with only Molotov and Chou En-lai. Therefore, he would like very much to find out what US intentions and plans were as to when the Secretary or Under Secretary would return to Geneva. He said that Massigli was making similar inquiries of Eden on his arrival today.

I said that I was unfamiliar as to US plans and asked Mendes what his understanding was as to when the conference would resume. He replied that it was his definite understanding that all five Foreign Ministers had agreed to return to Geneva not later than July 12, to recommence their discussions. Referring to US, he indicated that he expected that either the Secretary or the Under Secretary would return at that time. I told him that I was not informed but that I would inquire and let him know as soon as possible.

Mendes then informed me that he will announce tomorrow to the National Assembly that if a cease-fire is not agreed to prior to July 21, it will be necessary for the Assembly to approve the sending of conscripts to Indochina and that the last act of his government before resigning will be to introduce a law to authorize the sending of conscripts to Indochina.[2] This law would be introduced on July 21, and the Assembly would be required to vote on it the same day as they will have had two weeks from the date of his announcement to consider the matter. He said that his government would definitely not resign until such a law had been passed. Mendes also said that the shipping to move the first group of conscripts to Indochina would be ready on July 25, so that his schedule for parliamentary action would cause no delay in the movement of troops.

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[1] In telegram 45 from Paris, July 6, Ambassador Dillon discussed an article by Walter Kerr, dateline Washington, which had appeared in the morning's Paris edition of the *New York Herald-Tribune*. The article had alleged that the French were withholding important information from the United States regarding military withdrawals in northern Vietnam and also on the Mendès-France–Chou En-lai discussion at Bern. (611.51/7–654)

I then mentioned Deptel 39,[3] and Mendes said that he recognized that this posed a real problem. He said that Ely had been instructed to keep Diem as fully informed as possible and that he had stressed the matter again in a telegram to Ely. Mendes said, however, that no matter what occurs or what action is taken, he expects there would be difficulties with Diem, and he said that he wanted again to ask for our assistance at that time. He said he realized that the US would probably be unable to underwrite any settlement which might come out of Geneva. He said he also realized that it would not be easy for us to tell Diem to accept everything. Mendes said he did not want to ask us to do anything we could not do, but that he hoped we could by unofficial means discourage Diem from being too stubborn and difficult if a solution along general lines of US-UK formula had been reached.

DILLON

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[2] Premier Mendès-France made the announcement in the National Assembly on July 7. For the record of his statement, see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats*, pp. 3265-3267. Ambassador Dillon summarized the announcement in telegram 82 from Paris, July 7. (751G.00/7-754)

[3] For text of telegram 39 to Paris, July 2, see footnote 6, p. 1757.

751G.00/7-654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, July 6, 1954—11 p. m.

67. Repeated information London 13, Geneva 9. I took up Deptel 41[1] with Mendes this afternoon and he said that he felt that for the

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[1] Telegram 41 to Paris, July 2, read as follows:

"1. I presume Mendes-France's failure to suggest opening of talks, which President told Coty in his letter of June 16 we were ready to enter whenever French Government considered opportune, results from his lack of desire seriously to pursue subject with us at this time. I would like to have, however, assurance from you that there is no possibility that he failed to grasp clear implication that passage of President's letter.

"2. Have you had any reaction from Mendes-France with respect to contents our seven-point memorandum as agreed with British and jointly presented to French?" (751G.00/7-254) For information on President Eisenhower's letter, see footnote 1, p. 1720.

time being, the talks we were having in diplomatic channels here in Paris were covering the situation. He said that he hoped to have more detailed discussions with the Secretary or the Under Secretary at Geneva next week. He pointed out that the problem would be very different depending upon whether or not there was a cease-fire. If there was to be a cease-fire, he felt there would have to be some sort of guaranties and he intended to explore this subject with us as soon as he arrived at Geneva. On the other hand, if there was no cease-fire, it would be necessary to have prompt and very thorough conversations between France and the US. However, he would not be conducting the conversations as his government would no longer be in power.

DILLON

751G.00/7–754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, July 7, 1954—10 : 14 a. m.

101. Eyes only Aldrich and Dillon from Secretary. Please deliver following personal message to Eden:

"Dear Anthony: We have an inquiry from Mendes-France as to whether or not Bedell or I will return to Geneva and if so when. He apparently contemplates a reunion at the ministerial level July 12. I understand he is making a similar inquiry of you.

"It is my present feeling that it would be better if neither Bedell nor I went back. As you know, it would not be feasible for us to be parties to a settlement which fell below the seven point paper which we drew up together in Washington and gave the French through our Ambassadors. Our position in that respect is perhaps a little different from your own. In any event, I fear that the French, whether or not Bedell or I are there, will take a solution considerably worse than this and in that event our high-level presence at Geneva might prove an embarrassment to all concerned. In view, however, of our joint efforts for this area, I wanted to let you know of our present thinking and I would welcome quickly knowing how you yourself visualize this matter working out. Sincerely yours, Foster."

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated for information to Paris as telegram 68. Dulles met with President Eisenhower at the White House at 4 p. m. on July 7. The Secretary's memorandum of that conversation read in part as follows: "I told the President of the message which I had sent to Eden with reference to Geneva and indicated that we would make a final decision in the light of further information we might get from London and Paris." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President")

751G.00/7-754 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET

SAIGON, July 7, 1954—8 p. m.

90. Repeated information Paris 39, Geneva 21, Hanoi, Bangkok unnumbered. Following my call on Ely yesterday,[2] DCM and I were received by Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem. Throughout an hour's interview he kept repeating with monotonous insistence that means must be found to recover the three lost provinces of South Tonkin and throughout our conversation he made no attempt to conceal bitterness with which he views recent French withdrawal from the three bishoprics. Diem's strategic concept—if it may be so called—is to regain Nam Dinh, Phat Diem, and Bui Chu, attack vigorously Viet Minh heartland around Tuy Hoa and Vinh, and thus establish a friendly zone from South Tonkin as far as Hue. This he feels will give Vietnam necessary resources of manpower as well as a strong position confronting a Viet Minh-held Northern Tonkin. At one point in conversation he said he would be even willing to trade Hanoi for the three Catholic Provinces, but this no doubt is more a tribute to his religious fervor than to his strategic and political concepts. Later, however, he said that to lose Hanoi is to lose the war.

Diem inveighed with great vigor against French military desire to retain an enclave in Haiphong. He said, "all they want is not a bridgehead but merely a place from which to evacuate expeditionary corps and in which, if they stay, they will treat directly with Communist China."

Diem ascribed principal recent decisions of French Government in Indochina to Mendes-France and seemed to concentrate his ire largely on this one figure, although he certainly loses no love for General Salan. On his new cabinet, Diem said that it was composed of devoted Nationalists, included no members of any political party or of the confessional sects, and formed a homogeneous group dedicated to working on a program of action. However, when we asked what his platform would be, he said that Vietnam had already seen too many governments making too many speeches and that his own declaration, which would be published tomorrow, would be couched in very general terms and would be brief. He said that what people of Vietnam wanted now were deeds and not words.

HEATH

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[1] Ambassador Heath returned to Saigon on July 6.

[2] See telegram 92 from Saigon, July 7, *infra*.

751G.00/7–754 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, July 7, 1954—8 p. m.

92. Repeated information Paris 41, Geneva 23, Bangkok, Hanoi unnumbered. With McClintock I saw General Ely yesterday afternoon. He seemed in better health than when I saw him some four months ago, confident and determined. He is against a cease-fire and for carrying on the war. He said that he still believed that the successful prosecution of the war in Indochina was essential to the defense of Asia. He personally would welcome American participation along the lines that he had discussed several weeks ago in Washington. To hold the Viet Minh, however, he needs another two divisions, not so much for Tonkin as for the south since he believes the Viet Minh might detach some of their divisions now investing the northern delta for an operation towards the south where there is no force which could now withstand them. Contrary to rumors of disaffection he believes that he can count on the loyalty of the Vietnamese battalions in French Union Forces in the north, although he said he would feel safer on that score after the inspection he is making today and tomorrow in Tonkin. While he is in general confident of the morale of his troops it is a fact that they are tired and another reason for the necessity of a two division reinforcement which he has requested would be to give needed rest to certain units now in the line. Actually, he said, he needed three divisions but he thought such a request would frighten the French Government.

He made no apology for the restriction for the Hanoi–Haiphong defense perimeter and said he personally had taken decision on May 15 to evacuate the three southern bishoprics. Because of need for military security the decision had naturally to be kept most secret until operational date arrived.

Ely said that he had one additional withdrawal to make in Tonkin; namely a sector west of Hanoi which would further reduce defense perimeter to line of Day River. He had not, however, yet fixed date for this operation.

Militarily Ely said it would be sound if French Expeditionary Corps evacuated Hanoi and fell back forthwith on the Haiphong redoubt. However, this would have immediate and catastrophic political repercussions, and although as a general he perhaps ought to complete this movement, as Commissioner General he intended to stay and fight for Hanoi even though he might be beaten. Ely said, however, if the government made a deal giving the Viet Minh Hanoi he would, of course, obey orders and withdraw his troops, but he said he would thereupon tender his resignation as Commandant and Commissioner General.

He said he had seen the identical notes which the British and Americans sent after the Churchill–Eisenhower talks. He did not comment on those notes other than say that he had been disagreeably struck with the suggestion that the Haiphong enclave be held "if possible". This enclave must and could be held, he asserted, because among other reasons the offensive for the delta could be started from it to regain the delta. The Haiphong perimeter would be an essential beach-head which would serve as potential threat to Communist Chinese and thus strengthen hand of French negotiators at Geneva. In any case he said Haiphong must be held for a considerable time, even if the rest of Tonkin were conceded to the Viet Minh, to ensure the safe evacuation of the expeditionary corps.

Speaking generally Ely expressed regret that vacillations of American public attitudes had encouraged Chinese Communists to feel that there was no real western opposition to any demands which might be made for an Indochinese settlement. He still hoped, however, that if we could adopt a more robust attitude, bargaining position in Geneva would be strengthened. He said in this connection that one additional advantage of US undertaking a training program in Vietnam would be that it would be interpreted by Communist side as tangible proof of US determination not to let Vietnam become Communist.

He said Mendes-France and certain other members of French Government are willing to request Parliamentary approval for sending conscript troops to south Vietnam, but that others in Cabinet were dubious and some even opposed. In consequence he was not certain when or if this measure would be advocated by Mendes-France.

Heath

751G.00/7–654 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, July 7, 1954—8:03 p. m.

77. Re Embtel 50.[2] We see no real conflict between paragraphs 4 and 5 US–UK terms. We realize of course that even agreement which appears to meet all seven points cannot constitute guarantee that Indochina will not one day pass into Communist hands. Seven points are intended provide best chance that this shall not happen. This will require observance of criteria not merely in the letter but in the spirit. Thus since undoubtedly true that elections might eventually mean unification Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh this makes it all more important they should be only held as long after cease-fire agreement as

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated for information to London as telegram 129, to Saigon as telegram 67, and to Geneva as Tosec 523.

[2] Dated July 6, p. 1785.

possible and in conditions free from intimidation to give democratic elements best chance. We believe important that no date should be set now and especially that no conditions should be accepted by French which would have direct or indirect effect of preventing effective international supervision of agreement ensuring political as well as military guarantees. Also note paragraph 3 of President and Prime Minister joint declaration of June 29 regarding "unity through free elections supervised by the UN."[3]

Our interpretation of willingness "respect" agreement which might be reached is that we would not oppose a settlement which conformed to seven points contained Deptel 4853.[4] It does not of course mean we would guarantee such settlement or that we would necessarily support it publicly. We consider "respect" as strong a word as we can possibly employ in the circumstances to indicate our position with respect to such arrangement as French may evolve along lines points contained Deptel 4853. "Respect" would also mean that we would not seek directly or indirectly to upset settlement by force.[5]

You may convey substance above to French.

DULLES

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[3] The joint declaration, a statement of general principles issued by Eisenhower and Churchill at the conclusion of their talks in Washington, read in part as follows: "In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure they are conducted fairly." For the full text of the declaration, see volume VI.

[4] Dated June 28, p. 1757.

[5] In telegram 84 to Paris, July 8, repeated for information to Geneva, Saigon, and London, the Department of State added the following: "Our willingness make public statement we will respect agreement Indochina predicated assumption Associated States and in particular Viet Nam would agree terms settlement.

"We believe Mendes-France should be under no illusion that observance of seven points (Deptel 4853) would of itself suffice without agreement Associated States and request you make sure he understands this." (751G.00/7-854)

751G.00/7-754: Telegram

The Chargé at Phnom Penh (Goodman) to the Department of State

SECRET

PHNOM PENH, July 7, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received July 8—9:15 a. m.]

10. Sent Saigon 14, repeated information Department 10, Paris 9, Geneva 9. Both Prime Minister Penn Nouth and acting Foreign Minister Poc Thoun separately repeated to me today they pessimistic and fearful of direction Geneva Conference seems now to be taking. They said they expect that Cambodian-Viet Minh military discussions now opened at Geneva will bring Viet Minh agreement to evacuate its forces from Cambodia, but fear that Viet Minh conditions will be unacceptable. Poc Thoun said that Cambodia will not accept any settlement which visualized the "neutralization" of this country,

which would be nothing more than prelude to Communist takeover. However, both he and Prime Minister emphasized that thus far neither Communists nor any Western Power have approached Cambodia with feelers or speculation concerning such a possibility. Only indication that such a compromise may be building up has thus far come from apparently inspired press stories.

Prime Minister gave more detailed account of his attitude toward "neutralization". He said he is in principle opposed to a settlement which would weaken Cambodia or limit its development of an adequate defense system. However, he would certainly examine a proposal made to Cambodia under the auspices of all the great powers which might be offered as a solution to the Indochina war. If the guarantees seemed adequate and Cambodia's sovereignty not limited he might possibly accept such a proposal. However, he is not sanguine about the possibility, and doubts from press reports that US would be party to such a deal, in which case it very probably would not work and would be unacceptable to him.

In answer to my question both Ministers said there was no truth to June 30 UP despatch from Geneva which quoted "authoritative source" to effect that, once Geneva military meeting opened, parallel discussions would begin here. Government opposed from start idea of having discussions here since news of Viet Minh leaders in Phnom Penh would unnecessarily hearten Viet Minh in country.

GOODMAN

751G.00/7-854 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, July 8, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 12:45 p. m.]

105. Repeated information Paris 46, Hanoi unnumbered. Prime Minister Diem called on me this morning having previously asked that General O'Daniel be present.

1. Diem repeated insistently that if French gave up Hanoi it would be practically impossible to form a viable Annam–Cochinchinese State. Cochinchinese were too easy going either become soldiers or to resist Communist subversion. Fall of Hanoi would have a catastrophic psychological effect. He asked if US could not publicly and immediately announce that any settlement that would involve surrender of Hanoi to Viet Minh would be unacceptable to it and he sought US to use its influence on French to insist on retention of Hanoi.

2. Referring to Secretary's Los Angeles speech of June 11,[1] Diem

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[1] See footnote 4, p. 1676.

insisted that only thing that would save Indochina, indeed all Southeast Asia, would be American intervention.

3. He said it was urgently necessary for Vietnamese national army to be given autonomy. O'Daniel and I both agreed with him and suggested that Ely would undoubtedly be disposed to meet his wishes on that score. O'Daniel explained his concept of training and structure of Vietnamese Army but pointed out that at this time it would be impossible to withdraw Vietnamese battalions from Tonkin Delta or organize them there into autonomous forces.

4. To Diem's complaint re French evacuation of southern Tonkin Delta provinces, O'Daniel replied that such an action had been militarily unavoidable given the insufficient strength of French Union Forces. He pointed out that new contracted front in north was still longer than Korean front, which was defended by 20 divisions, whereas French had only equivalent of about 11 divisions in delta.

5. O'Daniel referred to recent desertions and urged Diem to issue a proclamation calling on Vietnamese troops to stand fast and be loyal to French command. Diem agreed as to necessity of such action but indicated it would be somewhat difficult to draft an effective proclamation at this moment.

HEATH

751G.00/7–854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY LONDON, July 8, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received 2 : 46 p. m.]

124. Eyes only Secretary. Re Deptel 101.[1] I saw Eden this afternoon. He will answer your message soonest.[2] Meanwhile he asked me to say he is going to Geneva Monday,[3] and will meet Mendes-France. Mendes-France wished him to come Paris over week-end but he is unable to do this. Eden will support French at Geneva in attempt to get most favorable possible settlement. He has no information or idea how matter may work out because Russians have not disclosed their hand and he is sure they will not do so until meetings take place in Geneva. Weakness of French position is of course fact that election would undoubtedly result in all Viet Nam going Communist and therefore division of country in all probability best solution. It is impossible to foresee how this trump card may be played by Communists. Eden

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[1] Dated July 7, p. 1788.

[2] In his response, transmitted through Ambassador Makins on July 8, Foreign Secretary Eden expressed the hope that Secretary Dulles or Under Secretary Smith would return to Geneva the following week. (611.93/7–854)

[3] July 12.

does not think it would be fair to you to expect you to attend Geneva Conference this juncture but thinks it would be very helpful to him and the French if Bedell could be there and hopes that if Bedell comes he will stop in London on way.

Comment: I am sure Eden is extremely anxious to have Bedell present because of Bedell's intimate knowledge of personalities involved at Geneva and of manner in which situation has developed.

ALDRICH

611.51/7–854 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, July 8, 1954—7:24 p. m.

85. For Dillon, Aldrich and Johnson. I think it is probably true that if we had put together all of the bits of information given at various times and at various political and military levels at Paris, Geneva, Washington, Saigon and Hanoi, the result would have been a reasonably clear picture of French military intentions as now revealed. I have never harbored any thought of any wilful concealment. Also I have always conceded that the French were clearly within their rights in making their own plans. I have repeatedly said at press conferences that we recognize that the French had the primary position in Indochina and that our role was that of a friendly observer who wanted to help if and when our help was wanted.

I do feel that there is a certain lack of any intimacy which is perhaps due to the fact that we have not in the past worked closely with the personalities of the present Government who have been plunged into an immense and engrossing task. In this respect they have our sympathy and I hope that you will try to remove any impression of carping criticism on our part.

We are quite prepared to agree that France has been overextended in relation to Indochina and we are not quarrelling with present French policy designed to limit its commitments more nearly within the bounds of its strength.

Our present intentions to leave representation at Geneva at the present level of Ambassador Johnson is primarily because we do not want to be the cause of any avoidable embarrassment by what might be a spectacular disassociation of the United States from France. Whatever France may be determined to do, we accept as within its prerogatives. We only regret that we cannot agree to associate ourselves in advance with an end result which we cannot foresee. Equally, we do not want to be in a position of seeming to obstruct an end result which from the French national standpoint seems imperative to its parliament and people.

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated for information to London as telegram 151 and to Geneva as Tosec 526.

Since starting to dictate this, I have received through Bonnet a message from Mendes-France strongly urging that either Bedell Smith or I should come back.[2] This apparently based on my today's press conference statement that neither of us had any present plans for returning.

I told Bonnet the substance of the preceding paragraphs to the effect that while we would be only too happy to contribute to a united front, we could not do so without knowing on what position that front was based. If there were a position which France was able to define and state that she would not accept anything else, then we would be able to judge whether or not that afforded the foundation for a united front. At the moment, it seems to me that there is less danger of doing irreparable injury to Franco-American relations if we avoid getting into a position at Geneva which might require a disassociation under spectacular conditions which would be deeply resented by the French as an effort on our part to block at the last minute a peace which they ardently desire.

We have not yet taken any irrevocable decision and even if no one from here comes over for the 12th, we would be standing by here under circumstances such that if developments at Geneva seem to indicate that our presence there would serve a really constructive purpose one or the other of us could get to Geneva overnight.

Unless you perceive objection I would like you to explain orally my position to Mendes-France, making clear that we are motivated by our estimate that in the end our presence at Geneva, even though initially it seemed an asset, might subsequently prove a liability to Franco-American relations.

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[2] The Secretary of State's office record of a telephone call received from Ambassador Bonnet at 5:41 p.m. read as follows:

"B. said Mendes-France is unhappy because the Sec. or the Under Sec. is not going back. The Sec. said it would be one thing to go if we had any idea of what will come out of it. We don't want to go when disassociation would be more damaging to our relations than if we didn't go. In the past we have had a common position. The Sec. said he is not critical of this as he knows they are operating under a popular mandate. But there is no joint position as when we went to Berlin. The Sec. said they may have to accept a solution we won't like, but we don't have to become a party to a solution we don't like. The Sec. did admit it is not a final decision. B. indicated he would pass this on. The Sec. said if we knew the French would stand on the 7-point position, we should be glad to go and help. But if we started with this and ended with something else, it would put a strain on our relations. B. said he doesn't think, territorially speaking, it will be much worse. The Sec. said we have no reason to hope for this with confidence. The Sec. said a united front has to stand on an agreed position. The Sec. said he realized you don't think you want to reach an agreement on that, and maybe you ought not. They left it they will speak tomorrow or in a few days." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

Code Room:—Please note

For London only. Please show Eden portion of this cable which follows first two paragraphs. Portion begins "We are quite prepared, etc." [8]

Dulles

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[8] A letter of July 9 from Ambassador Makins to Secretary Dulles stated that Eden continued to consider it important that either Dulles or Smith attend the concluding stages of the Geneva Conference in order to present a united front. (Presidential Correspondence, lot 66 D 204)

Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers

Hagerty Diary, Thursday, July 8, 1954

[Extract]

[Washington, undated.]

. . . .

I was able also to step out on the porch with him [Eisenhower] and talk about the Geneva Conference.[1] I told him that I had been thinking about it and that I thought if Dulles or Bedell Smith did not return, America would look like a little boy sulking in his tent. We would be blamed for everything and would have no opportunity or forum to express our dislike for whatever settlement the French might make in Indochina. The President said that that was a viewpoint which he wanted to consider, adding, "The trouble, Jim, with this whole damn situation is that the French will try to get us, if we are physically there with Dulles or Bedell, to approve of the terms of the settlement. We don't think it's going to be a good one and it certainly isn't one we can support. Now, do we go and sit there and become a party to it, or do we express our disapproval by not sending our top men back to the Conference?" I said that I thought we should make a fight against it or at least express our disapproval of it on the spot. If we did not have Foster or Bedell there, the Russians and the Chinese, together with a reluctant and ineffective France, could make quite a to-do about it. Eden, if he goes, would probably remain more or less quiet although undoubtedly he would be forced to hail the settlement as a step toward peace. "That's just the point," the President added, "if we do go and if we sound off against the settlement, as we should, then are we not dividing the free world and being put in the position of splitting publicly with France and probably with the U.K. It's a tough one to decide, but you have given me something to think over."

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[1] The context of this diary entry indicates that the recorded conversation occurred shortly after 5 p. m.

Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers

Hagerty Diary, Friday, July 9, 1954

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

. . . .

At the Cabinet meeting Dulles gave a review of the international situation for the Cabinet and read a draft of a cable which he was going to send to Eden, declining to have either himself or Bedell Smith return to Geneva.[1] The President interrupted Foster when he finished reading the cable and said that he thought probably we would have to study this question more fully before a definite decision was made. He repeated some of the arguments that I had presented to him the night before [2] and told Foster that he wanted to talk to him further on this subject. A decision has not been made, but again I hope we will see our way clear to send either Dulles or Smith back to Geneva. It's a tough spot admittedly, but I think it will be tougher if we do not go. If we are not on record to oppose the settlement when it happens, it will plague us through the fall and give the Democrats a chance to say that we sat idly by and let Indochina be sold down the river to the Communists without raising a finger or turning a hair.

. . . .

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[1] The Cabinet met at 10:10 a.m. The record of discussion of the Geneva Conference and Indochina contained in the minutes of the meeting is confined to the following: "Also discussed at length was the prospect of a Southeastern Asia grouping to maintain settlement should a satisfactory one be forthcoming from Geneva. He [Secretary Dulles] noted also the current problem of US participation in the second phase of the Geneva Conference, about which the President commented on the apparent soundness of the US position but possible adverse inference to be drawn by other nations of the world. . . . Sec. [Robert B.] Anderson noted the continuing need for attention to the matter of securing the evacuation from Indo-China of material furnished to the French, and Secretary Dulles and the President commented on our right to have it returned." (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file, "Cabinet Meetings")

No draft cable to Eden has been identified. However, the Dulles papers at the Eisenhower Library contain a text identical in large part with a portion of telegram 85 to Paris of July 8 (p. 1795). That text bears the following handwritten notations: 1) "Read to President and Cabinet—July 9, 1954," and 2) "Cable sent last night to Dillon." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Korea-Geneva 1954")

[2] See Hagerty diary entry of July 8, *supra*.

751H.00/7–954: Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, July 9, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 11:20 a. m.]

113. Repeated information Paris 50, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Manila unnumbered. Ambassador Donovan came over from Bangkok yester-

day for brief visit in Phnom Penh. He was received there by McClintock and Goodman. Party had interviews with acting Foreign Minister Poc Thoun, Prime Minister Penn Nouth, acting Chief of Staff Colonel Ngo Hou, and were received by King.

King, who obviously was not in good health, said that his informal approaches to various "neutral" governments had thus far met with affirmative responses to his inquiry if unofficial visit would be welcome to those governments. His Majesty added favorable replies had been received thus far not only from India, but from Burma, Ceylon, and Argentina. His official visit to Thailand was another matter. . . .

King said with respect to India he particularly wanted to see Nehru as a sort of political curiosity. He wanted to demonstrate to Nehru in person that Cambodia was really independent and to bring conviction to Indian Prime Minister that his concept of Cambodia as tutelary state under French domination was now completely out of focus following King's successful and bloodless revolt against French last year. King said motivation for his trip in Asia at least was fact that, although great Western powers had recognized Cambodia, new Eastern states still doubted authenticity of Cambodia's independence.

Continuing re problem of recognition of Cambodia, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister said that following recent conversations in Geneva between Cambodian representative and Vice President of Philippines Garcia latter had requested Cambodia Foreign Minister to submit documentary proof of Cambodian independence. Acting Foreign Minister, who is jurist, is now preparing dossier for submission to Philippines. McClintock said that we would be glad informally in Manila to discuss this question with Philippine president and to stress US belief that of all three Associated States in Indochina, Cambodia is in fact the most independent.

McClintock suggested to Penn Nouth that if at all possible King be accompanied by interpreter who could translate His Majesty's words direct from Cambodian into English and not from French into English. If King spoke only French to Nehru, Indians and others might be persuaded that he was not as free of French influence as His Majesty might suggest. McClintock likewise offered to send USAF doctors or His Majesty himself to a USAF hospital in Philippines or Japan in event his health is not speedily recovered. Apparently His Majesty is suffering from chronic liver disease exacerbated by dysentery.

Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and King all concurred that so far as Cambodia was concerned what happened to Vietnam was matter of slight interest. None of these officials believes that Cambodians would care in the least if Tonkin were lost to Viet Minh and none seemed to comprehend grave danger to Cambodia which loss of Hanoi would imply. They said repeatedly, "quarrels between the Vietnamese are of no interest to us, and the more they quarrel the better we like it."

Queries to King, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister as to Cambodia's attitude toward a Far East Asian collective defense arrangement evoked reply that in principle Cambodia would go along, but that basically Cambodians are not greatly interested. They were, however, unanimous in insisting that Geneva should not impose any servitude on Cambodia, particularly with respect to its inherent right of self-defense. All three persons insisted many times they wanted nothing more than direct US aid in end-items and training assistance as quickly as possible.

HEATH

396.1 GE/7–954

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State[1]

TOP SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] July 9, 1954.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR BONNET AND THE SECRETARY

The French Ambassador said that he had just received a message from Mendes-France asking him to thank me for my message (this is presumably the message based on the cable to Dillon of Thursday evening).[2] He said that the sentiments there expressed made him wish more strongly than ever that I were going to be at Geneva. He felt it was very important that we should not give the Communists the impression that there was a rift between the 3 Western Powers.

I read to Bonnet the substance of the above-mentioned cable to Dillon, explaining that we feared that the French would want to recede to a point where we could not follow them and that this might put us in a position of seeming to break up the Conference. This would be deeply resented by French public opinion and might have disastrous long-range effects far worse than those which might result from our not coming back to Geneva at this time. The French Ambassador sought to argue that it would be otherwise. He ended by saying that he knew from the tone of the message he had received from Mendes-France that the latter really felt very strongly on this matter.[3]

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[1] The log of the Secretary's daily appointments indicates that this conversation occurred at 2:10 p.m. (Dulles papers, "Daily Appointments")

[2] Telegram 85 to Paris, July 8, p. 1795.

[3] In telegram 119 from Paris, July 9, Ambassador Dillon reported that former Premier Reynaud had stated that it would be most regrettable if Secretary Dulles did not return to Geneva. Dillon added "During the course of the day, prominent men in Foreign Office, Government and Assembly, as well as leading French and foreign newspaper men, have also expressed hope that in interest of obtaining best possible terms from enemy, Secretary will change his mind and come to Geneva." (396.1 GE/7–954)

751G.00/7-954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL

PARIS, July 9, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received 6:13 p. m.]

109. Repeated information London 25, Saigon 10. If National Assembly should authorize dispatch of conscripts to Indochina in the event there is no settlement by July 20, we believe that such vote would have entirely different significance now than it would have had one or two months ago. Principal purpose, as Mendes-France has said, would be to safeguard security of the Expeditionary Corps, "Frenchmen coming to aid other Frenchmen." There was no implication of prolonged continuation of the war to stem Communist aggression or to safeguard any specified portion of Vietnam, despite warning that France would not capitulate.

We believe chances of Assembly approving dispatch conscripts after July 20 depend entirely on position Expeditionary Corps at that time. If their lives depend on it, it will probably be approved, but it is doubtful if it could be passed for any lesser reason.

If there is no settlement by July 20, and Mendes-France falls after having obtained vote on conscripts, it is our belief that successor government would be under same pressure to come to terms with Communists as was the previous government, and in fact under greater pressure. For majority of those voting for dispatch of conscripts would do so only in belief that it would facilitate return of the Expeditionary Corps, and fact that conscripts would be involved would inevitably further heighten pressure for an early end to the war.

DILLON

611.51/7-954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY

PARIS, July 9, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 6:48 p. m.]

118. Repeated information London 27, Geneva 14. London for Aldrich; Geneva for Johnson. For the Secretary. In absence of Ambassador Dillon, Joyce[1] saw Mendes-France at one o'clock today and provided him orally with substance Department telegram 85.[2] Mendes-France after hearing United States position as set forth reference telegram made following points:

1. He asked that his personal greetings be extended to you as well as his expression of deep appreciation of your message which indicated

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[1] Robert P. Joyce, Counselor of Embassy.

[2] Dated July 8, p. 1795.

sympathetic understanding of French position. He said he could take no exception to anything contained in your message.

2. Mendes-Frence emphasized French had been giving and would continue to give to Americans full and complete information regarding military plans and developments in Indochina as well as what was developing in negotiations at Geneva. He added that Chauvel had provided and would continue to provide complete information to Johnson.

3. He understands that it is difficult for us to commit ourselves in advance to result which cannot be foreseen, but added this is precisely his difficulty now. He had no idea what Communist side would come up with at end of next week and added that he wished to emphasize again he had no more information than we did on what they would offer.

4. Mendes-France stated French negotiating position was precisely along lines of seven points set forth in United States and United Kingdom memoranda. He stated he would not accept any Communist terms which did not in substance meet these seven points.

5. He then said with obvious deep feeling and emphasis that the considered presence of yourself or Bedell Smith at Geneva "absolutely essential and necessary". He added that if Americans on high-level were absent, the Communist side would automatically and inevitably draw conclusion that there was important split between three Western powers and that result would be that their terms would be even harsher. In other words, any impression we give of lack of unity at this critical point would obviously be interpreted as weakness and indecision which would mean opposition would automatically press for more.

5. [*sic*] Mendes-France stated with great emphasis that he had a deadline and that deadline was not July 21, nor July 22, nor any later time, but was midnight on July 20. He did not intend Geneva would turn into a Panmunjom and he proposed to tell Molotov this as soon as he sees him in Geneva. He went on to say it would be almost impossible for him to meet his own deadline in absence of his high-level Western friends and colleagues. With high-level persons present, last-minute decision could be taken which would be impossible with only subordinates present who would have to refer to their superiors and await inevitable delays of telegrams back and forth.

6. He did not believe that without high-level American presence in Geneva the Communists would offer him anything which he could accept. But even if they did, our absence would mean to them that we were disinterested and they could with impunity thereafter proceed by usual tactics of infiltration, subversion and threats of force to take

over *in toto* in spite of any agreement not backed up and reinforced by United States and United Kingdom.

7. Mendes indicated that our high-level presence at Geneva had direct bearing on where Communists would insist on placing line of demarcation or partition in Vietnam.[3]

DILLON

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[3] In telegram 130 from Paris, July 10, Ambassador Dillon further reported that Joyce had been told by Margerie and Parodi of the French Foreign Ministry that they considered Premier Mendès-France entirely sound on basic international issues. Margerie had stated that the position of the Premier on Indochina was virtually identical with that of Bidault. (611.51/7-1054)

Editorial Note

On July 9, 1954, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had several telephone conversations with Senator William F. Knowland of California, the Senate Majority Leader, who strongly opposed the return of the Secretary or the Under Secretary to the Geneva Conference. Knowland indicated that Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan shared his views. Secretary Dulles also talked with Senator Walter F. George of Georgia who agreed that Dulles should not return to Geneva. He feared that the proceedings would be elevated into a great international conference dominated by the Communists. Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa called to express his opposition to the Secretary's return. In addition, Dulles spoke by telephone with Vice President Richard M. Nixon who advised against the upgrading of United States representation at Geneva on the grounds that the United States should not give respectability to or be a part of an arrangement it didn't believe in. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

At 9:15 a. m. the following day, June 10, Secretary Dulles met with Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, the Minority Floor Leader, who indicated, according to the Secretary's memorandum of conversation, that he did not feel that he had sufficient factual knowledge of the question to have a solid judgment but that he had the impression that it would be better not to be represented at a high level at Geneva at that time. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Korea-Geneva 1954")

751G.00/7-1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, July 10, 1954—6 p. m.

124. Repeated information priority Paris 53, Geneva 28, Hanoi unnumbered. Reference: Deptel 84, sent Paris July 8 repeated Saigon

84.[1] I am glad Department has taken stand it will not make public statement that US will respect agreement on Indochina unless Associated States, and particularly Vietnam, agree to terms settlement. As noted mytel 115 of July 9,[2] minimum terms which Vietnamese Government will now accept for cease-fire are retention of Hanoi–Haiphong parallelogram and the two Catholic bishoprics. Majority of intelligent Vietnamese, except anti-northern Cochin Chinese, who it must be admitted are fairly numerous, are opposed to partition. They are particularly opposed to surrender of Hanoi. Belief of these elements, and I may add that of this Embassy, and also present Vietnamese Government, is that without retention of Hanoi and a foothold in north it would be impossible to create a durable state in remaining Vietnam. Announcement of partition along lines French have been secretly negotiating with Viet Minh will evoke permanent bitterness against France. French are accused of being interested only in protecting cement plant, and other important investments, and coal mines in Haiphong enclave and great French investments in Cochin China.

Even if fruitless, I believe we should use all our influence to persuade Mendes-France to include Hanoi in northern enclave. If Viet Minh object, they can be told that after an unspecified period of calm, elections within Hanoi–Haiphong enclave will determine to which side this region would fall. If Mendes-France repeats view expressed Geneva's 13 to Saigon of July 7[3] that Hanoi cannot be held by present force longer than end of September, we can answer that General Ely believes he can hold at least that long and that our offer of American participation under certain conditions (Secretary's Los Angeles speech) still holds good.

At beginning of Geneva conference, American delegation took a firm stand against partition of Vietnam and conclusion of any armistice except under effective, impartial, international control. We have now retreated from this stand.

I suggest that, if Mendes-France refuses to alter conditions which he has been discussing re partition of Vietnam and to maintain original French position on authoritative, impartial, and international control, US withdraw from Geneva conference, or at least reduce its delegation to observer status. I do not believe that it is in national interest for us to associate ourselves with agreement consecrating Communist victory in Indochina or that we should join in guaranteeing frontiers of new or remaining Vietnam which coincide with major French investments.

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[1] For text of telegram 84 to Paris, July 8, see footnote 5, p. 1792.

[2] Telegram 115 from Saigon, July 9, is not printed. (601.51G11/7–954)

[3] Telegram Secto 568 from Geneva, July 7, repeated for information to Paris as telegram 16, to London as telegram 10, and to Saigon as telegram 13, contained a summary of a conversation between Bonsal of the U.S. Delegation and Offroy of the French Delegation. For text, see vol. XVI, p. 1294.

HEATH

611.51H/7-1054

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia Affairs (Hoey)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] July 10, 1954.

Subject: Cambodian Ambassador's Request for Clarification of U.S. Position at Geneva

Participants: The Secretary
Mr. Nong Kimny, Cambodian Ambassador, Washington
Mr. R. E. Hoey, PSA

The Ambassador stated that he was returning to Geneva on Monday, July 12 to rejoin his Governments delegation. Prior to his return he wished to discuss with the Secretary the position of the U.S. in order that the Cambodian delegation could be fully informed.

The Ambassador stated that the Government and people of Cambodia were completely united in their determination to oppose any Communist effort toward neutralization or demilitarization of Cambodia. This policy had been made quite clear in the past by the Cambodian delegation at Geneva. As the Geneva Conference was approaching a critical stage Cambodia anticipated that there would be further demands made by the Communists with respect to neutralization and demilitarization. The Ambassador said his Government would strongly oppose any such demands and in this respect it would be most useful if the U.S. could furnish a written response to the letter from the Cambodian Foreign Minister to Ambassador Heath dated June 23, 1954 (Secto 513).[1]

The Secretary replied that an oral response had already been made to the letter. It was extremely difficult at this time to add to the oral statement. For example, the U.S. is now engaged in bilateral talks with the UK.[2] Depending on the outcome of those talks we would know to what extent our desire for a collective security arrangement could be accomplished. We hoped that a strong Southeast Asia security pact could be developed and that Cambodia would be a member to any such collective arrangement. In view of the imminence of the Ambassador's departure, it would not be possible to give a written response by Monday. However we would try, depending upon the progress accomplished in our talks with the British, to furnish a written reply while the Ambassador was in Geneva. Such a response would of course be transmitted through the U.S. delegation at Geneva. The Secretary referred to the independence of Cambodia which he described as being superior to that of the other two States. This fact in itself supported the Cambodian position that it should oppose Communist demands for neutralization and demilitarization. Cambodia's independent status is compatible with Cambodia's desire to call for outside military and economic assistance as it desires.

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[1] For text of telegram Secto 513 from Geneva, June 23, containing the text of the Cambodian letter, see vol. XVI, p. 1231.

[2] For an extract from the report of the Joint U.S.-U.K. Study Group on Southeast Asia, July 17, see p. 1847.

The Ambassador thanked the Secretary for his answer and assured him that it would be of great assistance to his delegation at Geneva in maintaining a firm position against Communist demands. The Ambassador hoped that a written reply during the course of the conference would further strengthen that position.

The Ambassador raised the question of UN action, should the Geneva Conference fail. He wished to know the position of the U.S. with respect to Cambodia entering a complaint into the UN, should developments at Geneva take an unfavorable trend and the conference fail.

The Secretary replied that this was of course a hypothetical question. The U.S. would approve in principle the introduction of a Cambodian motion into the UN should the Geneva Conference fail. However under the conditions of a failure of the Conference, careful study must be made of just how a UN appeal would be most effective in light of the circumstances then existing. We would be prepared to consult with the Ambassador after his return from Geneva, should this contingency arise.

The Ambassador asked for U.S. views with respect to a control organization. The Secretary replied that this is a most difficult matter. It would be hard to see how membership of a Communist power on a control organization could do anything but help the Communist cause. There is no guarantee against Communist aggression except by developing military strength to stand against such aggression. Military strength is a factor which they understand and is in itself the best guarantee. Cambodia should be in a position to safeguard itself against internal subversion since it would be expected that the Communists would make efforts to work from within and create internal dissension. The U.S. would wish to assist the Government of Cambodia in the development of such internal security and would hope that the Cambodian Government would stand firm against any efforts by the Communists to neutralize or demilitarize the country or prevent Cambodia from being able to call for assistance from without.

The Ambassador thanked the Secretary for his helpful clarification of the U.S. position and assured the Secretary that his government's delegation would stand firm against unreasonable Communist demands. The Secretary suggested that the Cambodian delegation at Geneva keep in close touch with the U.S. delegation.

611.51/7-1054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, July 10, 1954—10:25 p. m.

127. For Ambassador from Secretary. Limit distribution. Following is personal message from Secretary Dulles to Mendes-France which is to be delivered by Ambassador Dillon to Mendes-France in person as promptly as possible as instructed by separate cable.[2]

Begin Text: My dear Mr. President:

President Eisenhower (who has been kept closely informed) and I have been greatly moved by your earnest request that I or General Bedell Smith should return next week to Geneva for what may be the conclusion of the Indochina phase of the Conference. I can assure you that our attitude in this respect is dictated by a desire to find the course which will best preserve the traditional friendship and cooperation of our countries and which will promote the goals of justice and human welfare and dignity to which our two nations have been traditionally dedicated. We also attach great value to preserving the united front of France, Great Britain and the United States which has during this postwar period so importantly served all three of us in our dealings with the Communists.

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated for information to London as telegram 195 and to Geneva as telegram 21.

Secretary Dulles had met with President Eisenhower at 11 a. m. on Saturday, July 10. The pertinent portion of the Secretary's memorandum of that conversation read as follows:

"I reported to the President on the pleas we had received from Mendes-France and Eden that either I or Bedell Smith should go to Geneva for the closing phase of the Indochina conference. The President indicated that he would like to see us comply with this request, if it seems this could be done without either jeopardizing our basic principles or having to disassociate ourselves from our allies at Geneva under circumstances which would be even more dramatic and disastrous than if there is not high-level attendance.

"I reviewed with the President what I feared would be the developments which would place us in a very awkward position at Geneva. It was finally agreed that I would draft and send a full explanatory message to Mendes-France, with a copy to Eden, explaining our position, and that if the reply to this indicated a firmness on the part of the British and French for a position that we could go along with, then General Smith or I might go to Geneva. (I subsequently drafted such a message and read it over the telephone to the President about 6:30 p. m. Saturday and it was dispatched that night.)" (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President")

In his memoirs, President Eisenhower recalls the following: "On July 10, I asked Foster to draft a message to Mendès-France, explaining our reasons for preferring to avoid full diplomatic participation in a conference the results of which we could not approve. He was to send a copy to Eden, and await the results. If the British and French replied in a clear and firm manner so that we could go along with their positions, then I said either Foster or Bedell should go back. Foster drafted the memo, read it to me about 6:30 p. m., and it was dispatched that night." (Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 369)

[2] See telegram 128 to Paris, July 10, *infra*.

What now concerns us is that we are very doubtful as to whether there is a united front in relation to Indochina, and we do not believe that the mere fact that the high representatives of the three nations physically reappear together at Geneva will serve as a substitute for a clear agreement on a joint position which includes agreement as to what will happen if that position is not accepted by the Communists. We fear that unless there is the reality of such a united front, the events at Geneva will expose differences under conditions which will only serve to accentuate them with consequent strain upon the relations between our two countries greater than if the US does not reappear at Geneva, in the person of General Smith or myself.

Beginning early last April the US worked intensively with the French Government and with that of Great Britain in an effort to create a common position of strength. This did not prove possible. The reasons were understandable, and derived from fundamental causes which still subsist and influence the possibility of achieving at the present time a genuine "united front".

During the talks of Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secretary Eden with President Eisenhower and me, an effort was made to find a common position which might be acceptable to the two of us and, we hoped, to the French Government. This was expressed in the seven-point memorandum of which you are aware. I believe that this represented a constructive contribution. However, I do not yet feel that there is a united position in the sense that the three of us would be prepared to stand firmly on this as a minimum acceptable solution and to see the negotiations break off and the warfare resume if this position was not accepted by the Communist side. We doubt very much that the Communists will in fact accept this seven-point position unless they realize that the alternative is some common action upon which we have all agreed. So far, there is no such alternative.

Under these circumstances, we greatly fear that the seven points which constitute a minimum as far as the US is concerned will constitute merely an optimum solution so far as your Government and perhaps the UK are concerned, and that an armistice might be concluded on terms substantially less favorable than those we could respect.

We gather that there is already considerable French thinking in terms of the acceptability of departures from certain of the seven points. For example:

Allowing Communist forces to remain in Northern Laos; accepting a Vietnam line of military demarcation considerably south of Donghoi; neutralizing and demilitarizing Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam so as to impair their capacity to maintain stable, non-Communist regimes; accepting elections so early and so ill-prepared and ill-supervised as to risk the loss of the entire area to Communism; accepting international supervision by a body which cannot be effective because it includes a Communist state which has veto power.

These are but illustrations of a whittling-away process, each stroke of which may in itself seem unessential, but which cumulatively could produce a result quite different from that envisaged by the seven points. Also, of course, there is the danger that the same unacceptable result might come about through the Communist habit of using words in a double sense and destroying the significance of good principles with stultifying implementations.

We do not for a moment question the right of the French Government to exercise its own judgment in all of these respects. Indeed, we recognize that the issues for France are so vital that the French Government has a duty to exercise its own judgment. I have from the beginning recognized the preponderant interest of your Government as representing the nation which has borne for so many years the burden of a cruel and costly war. However, my Government equally has the duty not to endorse a solution which would seem to us to impair seriously certain principles which the US believes must, as far as it is concerned, be kept unimpaired, if our own struggle against Communism is to be successfully pursued. At the same time, we do not wish to put ourselves in the position where we would seem to be passing moral judgment upon French action or disassociating ourselves from the settlement at a moment and under circumstances which might be unnecessarily dramatic.

It is also to be considered that if our conduct creates a certain uncertainty in the minds of the Communists, this might strengthen your hand more than our presence at Geneva in a form which would expose probably to the world, and certainly to the Communists themselves, differences which the Communists would exploit to the discomfiture of all three of us.

Under all these circumstances, it seems to us that the interests of both of our countries are best served by continuing for the time being the present type of US representation at Geneva. This consists of able and responsible persons who are in close contact with the President and me.

If circumstances should alter so that it appeared that our common interests would be better served if higher ranking officials became our representatives, then we would be alert to act accordingly.

It is because I am fully aware of the serious and solemn nature of the moment that I have gone into the matter at this considerable length. It is possible that by the first of the week, the Communist position will be sufficiently disclosed so that some of the answers to the foregoing queries can be foreseen. This might clarify in one sense or another the thinking of us all.

In this connection, let me emphasize that it is our ardent hope that circumstances might become such that consistently with the foregoing either General Bedell Smith or I can personally come to Geneva and stand beside you. *End text.*

Dulles

611.51/7–1054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, July 10, 1954—10:33 p. m.

128. For Ambassador from Secretary. Limit distribution. In separate telegram [2] I am sending you a message from me to Mendes-France, which you should deliver to him in person in Geneva at the earliest possible moment. I think that in this connection you should not limit yourself merely to delivering the message, but that you should discuss the subject matter with him so as to be sure he gets the real flavor and import of what we are trying to explain. In this connection, please express the profound personal sympathy which the President and I have for the position of Mendes-France and our admiration for the courageous way in which he is tackling almost insurmountable problems. Also, emphasize that if we seem to differ from him as to whether Ambassador Johnson or General Smith or I am at Geneva, this is a difference of tactic which ought not to be exaggerated.

After having seen and delivered the message to Mendes-France as above, please then give a copy to Eden.

Because of your distinctive relationship to Mendes-France as Ambassador to France, we leave it to your discretion as to whether or not Johnson accompanies you. However, when you see Eden, you should have Johnson with you.

In this connection, please give Eden the following:

Begin text: Dear Anthony: Beedle and I greatly appreciate your messages. We are at the moment unable to decide in favor of either of us coming to Geneva for reasons which are set out in the lengthy exposition to Mendes-France, which I am making, and of which you will be getting at once a copy. I hope that even if you do not agree wholeheartedly with our reasoning, you will understand our point of view. It is a tough decision for us either way. With warm regards, Foster. *End text.* [3]

Dulles

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State. Repeated for information to Geneva as telegram 22 and to London as telegram 196.

[2] See telegram 127 to Paris, July 10, *supra*.

[3] In telegram 198 to London, July 11, Secretary Dulles transmitted the following instructions to Ambassador Aldrich: "Please see Eden urgently and deliver to him my message Deptel 196 (sent Paris 128, Geneva 22) and copy my message to Mendes-France Deptel 195 (sent Paris 127, Geneva 21). Both of course are private confidential communications." (611.51/7–1154)

751J.5/7-1054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Vientiane (Rives) to the Department of State

SECRET

VIENTIANE, July 10, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received July 11—7 : 52 a. m.]

3. Sent Saigon 5, Department 3, Geneva unnumbered, Paris 3. In connection with military talks Geneva I wish offer few observations re possible results solutions which may be reached concerning Laos.

1. If armistice agreed on with regroupment French areas Plaine des Jarres and Seno, Colonel De Crevecoeur has stated French Union troops might almost as well be evacuated completely. Lao Army insufficient and incapable watching frontier and holding vital border points. Therefore, renewed Viet Minh attack would find best troops too far from borders (example is Central Laos where key limestone hills stretching west from Mu Gia defile would be left open upon withdrawal French forces to Seno).

2. If all French forces and foreign military personnel withdrawn, Lao National Army would fall apart. Not only do French officers still run staff but encadre certain units, especially technical ones and six French Union Lao battalions which would be given Laos.

3. Furthermore, in all Laos there is one qualified doctor assisted in provinces by moderately capable first-aid men and nurses. All other doctors are French military, who care for civilians as well as military personnel. Also, virtually all weather and radio services at airports handled by French military.

4. In event war continues, formation division new men has been proposed. French Command believes this wishful thinking in view present difficulties filling requirements though few more battalions might be raised.

5. If armistice signed and Viet Minh theoretically leave Laos serious difficulties face Lao Army at best. Approximately half of 30,000 men are volunteers whose enlistments already ended but held at insistence French Command. Upon cessation hostilities already voiced desire Lao Government release these men will become too strong be resisted (viz. US post-World War II). Resultant need training new troops obvious.

In opinion of French military, and I agree, best to be hoped for in such event is rebuilding Army to present strength, equipping it properly and concentrating on effective training without attempt at sizable enlargement. This decision will probably be forced upon Laos in any case by Chinese demand that Laos and Cambodia limit forces.

6. Not be omitted is question supplying equipment Lao Army under any condition. French feel always possible smuggle necessary things from Thailand but I consider this poor idea propaganda-wise even if

possible get by proposed observation teams Thailand and Laos. In view five points only real solution is present one demanded by Lao Government. Even then I do not believe Viet Minh will evacuate guerrillas. As already suggested by Embassy Saigon, formation stockpile equipment now appears wise. Laotians eager welcome MAAG people as inspectors or for actual training. However, latter impossible now due to treaty signed with France last year and because French would never relinquish overall command unless cooperate by Paris.

Whether solution reached or not at Geneva, militarily, future course Laos seems lie in forming well-trained and equipped force of approximately 40,000 including technicians, and to join an area defense agreement.

RIVES

Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers

Hagerty Diary, Sunday, July 11, 1954

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

I dropped down to see the President at ten o'clock after church to see if there was anything further he wanted me to do. He had nothing in particular that he wanted me to do with reference to the change of plans, but we did have an opportunity to talk about the international situation and the upcoming Geneva Conference. He told me that he had been giving considerable thought to our discussion of several days ago and had reached the point in thinking it over where he thought it was necessary to have Foster Dulles fly to Paris to confer with Mendes-France and Eden on the entire situation. He told me at that time that Dulles would announce on Monday that he was leaving for Paris Monday evening [1] and that if Dulles did reach an agreement, we could support with the French and British, Dulles would also have Bedell Smith go back to Geneva. "All in all it is going to be a tough situation, but I think you are dead right in urging us to have a high level American representative at Geneva. Otherwise, the stories from Geneva will be entirely colored by Red propaganda and also by propaganda of our allies, particularly the French, who will then blame us for everything that goes wrong."

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[1] The log of the President's daily appointments for Monday, July 12, indicates that he held an off-the-record meeting with Secretary Dulles at 9:40 a. m. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower records, "Daily Appointments") Thereafter, Dulles called MacArthur from the White House instructing him to make arrangements through the U.S. Delegation at Geneva for the Secretary to meet with Premier Mendès-France in Paris on the evening of July 13. Mendès-France was not to be led to believe that Dulles would be going on to Geneva. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file) MacArthur immediately called Ambassador Johnson at Geneva. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Korea-Geneva 1954") At 12:55 p. m. Dulles received a call from Johnson indicating that Mendès-France would be pleased to meet with Dulles in Paris the following evening. The Secretary so informed the President. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

For President Eisenhower's recollection of these events, see *Mandate for Change*, pp. 369–370. For the statement issued by Secretary Dulles prior to his departure for Paris on the evening of July 12, see Department of State *Bulletin*, July 26, 1954, p. 123.

751G.00/7–1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, July 11, 1954—9 p. m.

133. Repeated information Geneva 20, Saigon 12, London 34. Limit distribution. For Secretary from Ambassador Dillon. During conversation with Mendes at Geneva, I informed him of contents of Deptel 84[1] and of our feeling that Vietnam Government should be kept more fully informed by French. I told him that we felt time had now come for Vietnam to be informed of general lines of seven point program. Mendes said he would consider informing Vietnamese after discussing matter with his advisors during afternoon. He said he had originally felt it preferable not to inform them until he could assure them that US was prepared to guarantee them against further aggression or subversion.

He then spoke at length of necessity for a clear-cut US guarantee that would protect Associated States in the event that the Communists did not honor the spirit of any agreement that might be reached at Geneva. Without such a guarantee he said that a settlement would not be worth the paper it was written on. Mendes asked me to inquire as to whether if a settlement within seven point framework was obtained, Secretary would then be willing to come to Geneva to close conference and to work out necessary guarantees to protect Associated States.

He then discussed in some detail the situation which would arise if no settlement was reached at Geneva. He said the sending of conscripts to Indochina would then be debated on July 22 and 23. If the National Assembly approved, the first division would leave on July 25 and the second division about 10 days later. It would take a month to reach Indochina and three more weeks to get troops ready for action. Therefore the first division of conscripts would not be ready in Indochina until about September 15.

This schedule for reinforcements would be known to Viet Minh and the result would undoubtedly be a massive Viet Minh assault during August prior to arrival of new troops.

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[1] For text, see footnote 5, p. 1792.

Mendes said he doubted if French alone could successfully resist such an assault. He said that French Government would officially inform US of these facts at end of July if no cease-fire reached.

I reminded him of US requirements for action on our part, and he said he could not foretell how French Parliament might react. They might react strongly and request US help to continue the war or they might have what he termed a "nervous breakdown" and push for capitulation at any price to save expeditionary corps.

If no cease-fire, Mendes will resign, but in view of the above, I feel it is possible that if no cease-fire is reached the French Government which will succeed Mendes may appeal for US armed help, and may meet all US terms. Not possible to estimate timing of such an appeal but it could occur during August when US Congress no longer in session.

DILLON

751G.00/7–1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, July 11, 1954—9 p. m.

134. Repeated information Geneva 21, London 35. Limit distribution. For Secretary from Ambassador. I delivered Secretary's message Department telegram 127[1] to Mendes in Geneva after lunch Sunday.[2] At same time, I gave him personal message contained in first paragraph Department telegram 128.[3] In view Eden's absence (Secto 585),[4] I did not see him. Johnson will deliver message to Eden tomorrow, if Aldrich has not already done so.

Mendes was very touched by personal message in Department telegram 128 and twice asked me to be sure and thank Secretary on his behalf for this thought.

Regarding Department telegram 127, Mendes expressed extreme disappointment and gave concern at United States decision not to be represented at Ministerial level. He divided his remarks into two categories, first, the effect of our decision on Conference itself, and second, the overall effect of our decision on world affairs.

Regarding first category, Mendes stated that our absence made French bargaining position far weaker. He stated that if Secretary was present, France would not accept anything at Conference that was unacceptable to United States. As he put it in his own words, presence of Secretary would give United States in effect a veto power on decisions of Conference. He felt it particularly important that we have someone at Geneva who could take strong personal position with Molotov, if and when necessary, and without having to refer to Washington for instructions. Mendes also feels that United States absence at Ministerial level will lead Communists to increase their pressure and be more demanding in order to deepen the obvious rift between the Western powers. He said France had not as yet departed from the Seven Point United States–United Kingdom position and he did not make any commitment to hold to these points during coming week, except for statement regarding United States veto power if Secretary present.

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[1] Dated July 10, p. 1807.

[2] July 11.

[3] Dated July 10, p. 1810.

[4] Telegram Secto 585 from Geneva, July 11, reporting that Eden was not due to arrive until the following day, is not printed. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 260)

On the overall effect of our decision, Mendes pointed out that this will be first time since the war that United States not represented at equal level with other powers in an important conference. He said he felt certain that Europe would interpret United States absence as first step in return to a policy of isolationism. This he felt, would have catastrophic effects not only in Far East, but also in Europe and would be great cold war victory for Communism. According to Mendes, we would in effect be saying "do your best, you have our sympathy, but result is no real concern to us".

I tried hard to dissuade Mendes from this viewpoint, but without much success. His statement regarding United States veto power if Secretary present, led me to point out that there must also be an agreed alternative if Conference failed. Mendes promptly replied that only alternative to cease-fire at Geneva would be internationalization of war with United States military forces coming promptly to assistance of French. This aspect of our talk being covered more fully in separate telegram, being repeated to Saigon.[5]

Finally, Mendes asked if there was anything he could do specifically to create a situation that would make it possible for Secretary to come to Geneva. He asked me to pass this question on to Washington. In this connection, he specifically questioned sixth paragraph of Secretary's letter, and said he knew of no French thinking along such lines, except possibly on subject of international supervision. He wondered where United States had got the ideas expressed in this paragraph.

While I was talking with Mendes, Johnson talked with Chauvel and showed him a copy of Secretary's letter. Chauvel showed Johnson a cable from Bonnet which indicated that Bonnet may have given Secretary the impression that French were considering retreating from Seven Point program.

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[5] See telegram 133 from Paris, July 11, *supra*.

Chauvel and Johnson joined us at end of our talk, and Johnson and I suggested that if Mendes developed any concrete ideas which would help meet United States fears, it would be helpful if he put them into a reply to Secretary's letter. While Mendes was non-committal as to a formal reply, I rather expect he will make one. In closing, Mendes said he would keep in close touch with Johnson. During talk, Mendes made it clear that while presence of Under Secretary at Geneva would be most helpful, he very much hoped that Secretary himself could come.

DILLON

396.1 GE/7–1254: Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 12, 1954—5 p. m.

150. Repeated information Paris 62, Geneva 29, Hanoi unnumbered. I conveyed to Diem this morning oral message from Secretary transmitted in Department's 121, July 10, sent Geneva Tosec 529.[1] He was appreciative of message but obviously disappointed it did not provide for France keeping up fight and American intervention in case Viet Minh refused his minimum requirements of retention of Hanoi–Haiphong parallelogram plus return to Vietnamese administration of south delta provinces, particularly bishoprics of Phat Diem and Bui Chu. Nevertheless, he was heartened to note that America and Britain were opposed to any restrictions on Vietnam maintaining adequate forces for internal security, to import arms and to employ foreign advisers. He was however somewhat worried about phrase "adequate for internal security." In normal circumstances Vietnam could get along with a relatively small army to maintain internal order. Under present circumstances of Communist infiltration and threat, Vietnam would need a much larger, stronger army than she now possesses.

He asked me urgently to have Secretary's message repeated by US Geneva delegation to Foreign Minister Do. He said he could of course telegraph letter but he very much feared French had "broken" Vietnamese code. As regards scheme of trading "regroupment zones" for Viet Minh in south in return for Viet Minh agreement to allow Vietnamese Government to retain Hanoi and southern provinces in Tonkin delta, he said that on reconsideration only southern regroupment zones they could afford militarily, economically, and politically to leave to Viet Minh would be Plane des Joncs and southwest corner of Vietnam around Ha Tien (cf. Embtel 115).[2] He had telegraphed his Foreign

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[1] For text of telegram Tosec 529 to Geneva, July 10, regarding the question of international control and a Geneva settlement for Indochina, see vol. XVI, p. 1324.

[2] Telegram 115 from Saigon, July 9, is not printed. (601.51G11/7–954)

Minister in Geneva and urged him to be "persuasive" in convincing Mendes-France of necessity of retention of Hanoi and south Tonkin delta provinces.

In conclusion Diem said that his government was gravely handicapped by opposition of Binh Xuyen, Cao Daists, and Hoa Haos, but he believed he would be able to overcome or nullify this opposition. His government was in terribly difficult situation but he was convinced he would succeed.

HEATH

751G.00/7–1254 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, July 12, 1954—9 p. m.

155. Repeated information Paris 64, Geneva 30, Hanoi unnumbered. I told General Ely today that acting under instructions I had informed Ngo Dinh Diem of kind of provisional agreement on cessation of hostilities in IC which US and British (as result of Washington talks) might be prepared to respect (Deptel 121, July 10).[1] I inquired whether he had been authorized to notify Ngo Dinh Diem of course of Franco-Viet Minh conversations at Geneva. He replied that he was asking permission from Mendes-France so to inform Diem. All he had done heretofore was to indicate to Diem that trend of conversations regarding regroupment was in direction of a provision partition. He said he expected to see Diem shortly and hoped instructions to acquaint him fully and frankly of conversations with Viet Minh would have arrived.

I informed Ely that Diem was insistent on vital necessity that Vietnam retain Hanoi–Haiphong–southern province enclave in Tonkin. Ely said that if the intention was to renew hostilities, presumably with American participation, that of course was position to take. If there were no willingness to renew hostilities, there was little chance of retaining anything in north except Haiphong enclave, which in any case must be retained for a considerable time to permit of evacuation of people and matériel. He said Vietnamese Government had asked him in case French decide to abandon Hanoi to let Vietnamese units now in French Union Northern Command defend city. Ely said without French direction and support Vietnamese defense of city could not last three days.

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[1] Reference is to telegram Tosec 529 to Geneva, July 10, which was also sent to Paris as telegram 124, to Saigon as telegram 121, and to London as telegram 190. For text, see vol. XVI, p. 1324.

He told me that he was disquieted over indications of political activity by General Hinh; that he would have to have a talk with him soon. Hinh had certain military qualities, but he was a "light weight (leger)". He had been more active as a politician than a general.

He was also disquieted by steady stream of desertions from Vietnamese units in north and he attributed this partly to uncertainty provoked by Geneva Conference and lack of remedial action by Hinh and new government. Desertions were not yet serious in extent, but might easily become so.

He said he felt certain of being able to hold Hanoi at present but at end of September or early October he would probably be unable to do so unless reinforcements arrived promptly. Chinese were stepping up their shipments of artillery, trucks and other equipment.

Viet Minh probably had fifty 105s at present time to use against Hanoi and increasing quantities of anti-aircraft artillery.

HEATH

751G.00/7–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, July 13, 1954—3 p. m.

170. Repeated information Paris 65, London 5, Geneva 31. We note with some concern suggestion in numbered paragraph 7 Deptel 125 sent Paris repeated London 192, Saigon 124, Geneva Tosec 530 [1] that a declaration be issued presumably by US, UK and France, provided Associated States agree to accept an armistice on basis of seven points set out US–UK *aide-mémoire* of June 26,[2] including among other things, a statement that US will not resort to force to upset that settlement. Irrespective of what our policy may be toward such an armistice, it would seem to us unnecessary to give the Communist side an extra trump by publicly stating that we will not resort to force to change the agreement. The implicit threat of use of force to preserve integrity of Indochina and Southeast Asian states is one of few restraining influences which might be brought to bear on further Communist encroachment, and accordingly, it seems to us that any declaration we make should not contain a self-denying ordinance.

HEATH

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[1] Telegram 125 to Paris, July 10, not printed, contained an agreed general summary of the progress of the U.S.–U.K. Study Group. This outline was provided for use in briefing French authorities. (790.5/7–1054) Regarding the work of the Joint Study Group, see the extract of its July 17 report, p. 1847.

[2] See telegram 4853 to Paris, June 28, p. 1757.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Coordinator of the United States Delegation at the Geneva Conference (Johnson) [1]

SECRET

PARIS, July 13, 1954.

Participants:

The Secretary	Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden
Ambassador Dillon	Sir Harold Caccia
Mr. MacArthur	Sir Gladwyn Jebb
Mr. Phleger	Sir Anthony Rumbold
Ambassador Johnson	

Prime Minister Mendes-France
M. Latournelle
M. Parodi
M. de Folin

Following dinner Mendes-France explained to Eden and the Secretary present state of negotiations with respect to regroupment areas in Vietnam. He had a map showing the various proposals and counterproposals in detail and the areas occupied by the French and the Vietminh respectively. He said the original French proposal from which they had not deviated was for a line along a defensive ridge somewhat north of Donghoi in the vicinity of the 18th parallel (all parallels in accordance US system). He said this line was somewhat north of the Donghoi Thakhek line set forth in the seven points of the US–UK memorandum.[2] He said the original Vietminh proposal was for somewhat "S" shaped line in the vicinity of the 13th parallel. They had then moved to a line in the vicinity of the 14th parallel.

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[1] This meeting took place at the Hotel Matignon at 8:30 p. m. Regarding the circumstances of the Secretary's trip to Paris, see footnote 1, p. 1812. See also extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 206th Meeting of the National Security Council, July 15, p. 1834. The meeting described here was preceded by a conversation between Secretary Dulles and Premier Mendès-France from 7:30 to 8:30 at the residence of Ambassador Dillon. In the course of that session, which dealt largely with European matters, Dulles delivered remarks which were summarized in the record of the meeting as follows: "The second point that the Secretary said he wished to make related to France being overextended. He said that he understood the French people and Government felt that France was overextended in Indochina. He was inclined to agree. He earnestly hoped that there was not a feeling in France that we were pushing them to commitments which they could not fulfill. This was not the case. On the contrary, we had recognized that France was overextended, and for this reason, had given billions of dollars of economic and military aid to France so that she could meet the commitments she had undertaken both in Europe and in Indochina. In effect, the U.S. had done its utmost to bridge the gap between the responsibilities which France had undertaken and her capabilities to meet these responsibilities. In other words, far from pushing France to commitments that she could not meet, we had done our utmost to assist her in bridging the gap; and had extended to her very substantial aid which had in effect enabled her to increase her dollar reserves. Fundamental to U.S. policy with respect to France was the desire to assist France in reaching a situation where her responsibilities would be balanced by her resources." For the complete record of the meeting, see volume VI.

[2] See telegram 4853 to Paris, June 28, p. 1757.

Yesterday after they had heard the Secretary was meeting with Mendes-France and Eden in Paris, Dong had made a proposal to Mendes roughly along the 16th parallel, the line being just to the south of the French air and naval base at Tourane. Mendes ascribed this relatively major shift in the Vietminh position as attributable to Vietminh knowledge of the Secretary's meeting with himself and Eden. Mendes stated that French had flatly rejected this proposal and could never agree to Vietminh control of the naval and air base at Tourane, the important center of Hue and the vital road to Laos. He said that with respect to the road to Laos Molotov had suggested that the French could have the right of access to Laos along the road, apparently something along the lines of the corridor to Berlin. Mendes said that the road was narrow, mountainous, with many culverts and bridges and that French must have full control of the area [on] both sides of the road, as Communist performance on any corridor arrangement could not be anticipated and stray individuals could blow bridges and culverts making the road unuseable.

He indicated that the French would be prepared to drop their line some small distance south, possibly to the Donghoi Thakhek line or slightly south thereof.

The French map had an enclave drawn around the Haiphong area but there was no discussion of this.

With respect to Laos, Mendes-France stated that Communists now admitted to the existence of Vietminh forces which would be withdrawn, but had insisted upon some temporary regroupment areas for the indigenous resistance forces pending their integration into Laotian forces. He said the Communists recognized the unity of Laos under its present government. He stated that the indigenous resistance forces were unimportant, totalling about 25 hundred men and that the Laotians were confident they could handle this problem. However, on the military level the Vietminh had come forth with a regroupment proposal for a line running the entire length of Laos connecting up with their original ("S" shaped) 13th parallel line in Vietnam. He said that the French military experts had shown Vietminh proposal to the Soviet military experts and the latter had characterized it as absurd. Mendes appeared to feel there was no serious problem with respect to Laos, except that of the two French bases which he said consisted of small air strips, some stores of ammunition, garrisons totalling about 2000 French Union forces. He said the bases were entirely without military interest to the French and from the French standpoint they had no desire to maintain them. However, Laotians placed high value on them and had asked they be retained and he thought the Laotians would be able to work out something on this with the Vietminh.

Mendes said that Communists had recognized and seemed willing to agree to French military instructors and technical assistance to the armed forces of Laos and Cambodia as opposed to French garrisons being stationed there. He said the Communists were entirely unwilling to see any US military personnel stationed there in any capacity whatever and were extremely sensitive on the subject of US bases in those countries. The Secretary disclaimed any intention or desire for the US to establish military bases of any kind in those countries and stressed the importance of being able to assist those countries to maintain adequate defense forces and contribute to their economic development. In view of the traditional Communist charge that US bases were being established wherever we have had even an economic aid program, and the US legislative requirement that US personnel have some role in the administration of US economic aid, he expressed the fear that what the Communists were really attempting to do was to keep all US personnel, both civilian and military out of these areas. He made it clear that the US would be willing to assist these countries but we were not willing or able to simply turn money over to them to spend as they saw fit.

Mendes-France and Eden both indicated that their understanding was that the Communists were opposing US military bases in the traditional sense of the term. The Secretary expressed the strong view that it was of vital importance not to agree to any terms which would inhibit the ability of Laos and Cambodia and retained Vietnam to obtain economic and military assistance from the free world.

There was no specific discussion of Cambodia. Mendes-France apparently did not take much interest in Cambodia. He said they had 99.5% full independence and they apparently wanted to stay in the French Union and that was all right with him.

In response to the Secretary's questions concerning the Communist position on political settlement, Mendes stated that Dong had first insisted on elections within six months after the cessation of hostilities and had also insisted that French troops must be evacuated before the holding of elections. Mendes-France stated that he had pointed out the inconsistency of this position and that Dong had now agreed that the question of the date for elections should be left for determination by the two governments in Vietnam. He said Dong was preparing a draft of some sort of general declaration in this regard. He said that the Communists were entirely willing to see Vietnam remain in the French Union and the Secretary pointed out that Communists would probably be very glad to see three Communist members in the French Union. Mendes replied that there was no danger of three, only of one, i.e. Vietnam and that he was well aware of this possibility and was considering handling it by some statement to the effect that the conditions for membership of a united Vietnam in the French Union would be determined by subsequent agreement.

There was a brief discussion about the International Control Commission for Indo China being discussed at Geneva. Mendes-France said he might eventually have to accept a Communist member on such a commission but he would not agree to the Communists having veto power.

Following presentation by Mendes, the Secretary went into a detailed, careful and reasoned exposition of his viewpoint on US representation at Geneva. He said that it was clear that the main Soviet Communist objective was Europe and that if they could disrupt allied unity with respect to Europe, preventing ratification of EDC and reconciliation between France and Germany, the major objective would be accomplished. For the U.S.S.R., the Far East was essentially a secondary objective, but they would exploit the situation in the Far East to the maximum so as to prevent Allied unity, particularly so as to cause a split between the US and France. The US and France were united by deep ties of common interest and sentiment and he desired to do everything possible to maintain those ties and prevent disunity developing. His interest was in doing whatever was best to achieve this objective.

With respect to Geneva he was very concerned over the situation if there was high level representation there. There were two major possibilities.

1. The Communists would make proposals conditional upon US association and guarantee in such a form that they knew could not be accepted by the US. The Communists probably knew very well just how far the US was able to go. If, as would be necessary, the US refused to associate itself with and did not approve such guarantees, in the eyes of French public opinion US would be responsible for failure of France to achieve peace in Indochina. This would place an intolerable strain upon US–French relations.

2. On the other hand, the French might well come to the point that they would say they did not feel they could resist making a poor settlement with the Communists unless the US would join with them in the fight on brief notice if they turned down the Communist terms. The US several months ago had stated the conditions under which it would join in action to defend Indochina on the basis of united action. Since then, the military situation had deteriorated very substantially, and the conditions under which we were then willing to join in collective action were no longer the same. If the French, as a condition for not making a bad agreement at Geneva, should ask us to give them a commitment to join with them in Indochina in a matter of days, this we would not be able to do. Neither the Secretary nor the President could make such a commitment. Whereas three months ago he was confident

that Congressional approval for military action in Indochina could have been obtained under the conditions set forth to the French, he was not confident that this now could be done. If there were high level representation at Geneva, this problem would be much more acute, and therefore after long and careful thought and full discussion with the President, the conclusion had been reached that the long-term interests of US–French relations would be best served by neither the Secretary nor the Under Secretary returning to Geneva.

Mendes-France replied that as the US was in any event represented at Geneva, the problems mentioned by the Secretary were not avoided. The US could still be faced with the same dilemmas. He felt very strongly that the Communists feared that the Secretary would come to Geneva and that his failure to come would be interpreted by the Communists as indicating a rift in allied relationships which could be exploited by them. The Secretary's presence would without question assure that the Communists would agree to much more reasonable terms than if he were absent. Eden strongly supported Mendes-France. Eden said that he felt it would be possible to obtain a settlement within the framework of the seven points but that it would be a very tough negotiation, the balance might well be on a knife-edge. The Secretary's or Under Secretary's presence could well be the factor which would tip the balance in favor of our side.

The Secretary then explained carefully against the background of US public opinion and political situation the difficulties of the US Government associating itself with any agreement which would appear to guarantee to the Communists the fruits of their aggression. He said that Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, were clearly not going to be happy with any settlement the French would be able to reach and were already asking for our help. Mendes replied that these countries were strongly divided and that while asking for our help they were also all talking with Dong in Geneva. The Secretary earnestly explained that we wanted to help any way we could, that the US did not want to see the war continue in Indochina. While if the war did continue it could well turn into a situation that would engulf all of our countries in war, from a military standpoint we felt that commitment of a major part of our own and our allies' military force to combat the "third team" of the Communists, would be a colossal military error. Whereas three months ago it appeared the situation might have been retrieved with the addition of some naval and air power together with a small commitment of ground forces, that time had now passed. We full well realize the realities of the situation which the French face. We will not reproach them for what they find it necessary to do. We recognize their primary responsibility. However, the US Government could not be in a position of seeming to approve the sale of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam into Communist captivity. The memories of

Yalta in the United States were very fresh. The US Government cannot be associated with a settlement which would be portrayed in the US as a second Yalta. The very fact that the US had agreed even to the holding of the Geneva Conference had been unreasonably portrayed as a major diplomatic defeat for the US and the fact that the President and the Secretary even agreed to the Conference has been a political liability.

Mr. Eden expressed the view that the important thing was to get the best possible settlement, then make it clear that if the Communists broke it, everybody would be lined up against them. He hoped that not only the US, UK, and France would be able to take such a position together, but that it would be possible to obtain wide agreement thereon in South Asia. This would be a very important gain. The Secretary again expressed the view that if the Communists maneuver the situation so that it appears that the US is the only obstacle to a settlement, it would so strain relations between the allies that EDC would be killed and the Communists would accomplish their major objective in Europe. He did not want to expose himself to that risk. He said that he was prepared to say publicly and in writing that he was 100% behind the present French demands in Indochina, and wondered if this might help the French. Mendes-France again reiterated that the risks for the US are exactly the same whether high-level representation is present or not at Geneva and without the Secretary's presence the efficacy of US support of France is not the same.

Mendes-France then referred to the seven points, stating that he will do all he can to obtain a settlement within their framework, that if the Secretary were there he could help in this regard. If he is not there, he, Mendes-France, is satisfied the result would not be as good and his absence would weaken the French. The Secretary replied that the real question is what we do if Geneva fails. Perhaps the French negotiating position would be strengthened if it could portray to the Communists the US as the "wicked partner" in the background. Eden reacted very strongly to this, saying that he under no circumstances would be prepared to portray the US to the Communist as the "bogeyman", the UK, US, and France are allies and he simply would not place himself in such a position. The Secretary suggested that this aspect might be implict rather than explicit, to which Eden replied that Communists take advantage of every possible opportunity to try to get the British to say that the US is what is preventing peace, that the US is the only country that does not want peace. He absolutely refuses to be trapped into any such statement because he knows it is not true.

Mendes-France then stated that if France desired to obtain peace at any price, it would be much easier to do if the US were not there.

However, this was most emphatically not the French position. France will do its best to get a settlement within the framework of the seven points, but if the US is not there at a high level, this will be much more difficult. There are definite limits beyond which France will not go. If there is no agreement by July 20, the war will continue, with intensification. The Communists well know that France will send reinforcements. The danger of the enlargement of the war will be great. However, reinforcements cannot arrive there until September. Therefore, he is convinced that if there is no settlement by July 20 the Vietminh will immediately launch a big offensive. It will be impossible to hold Hanoi. Haiphong can be held only if there is naval and air support. There might be a question of whether the US could help if that situation arises. He wants to do all possible to obtain such a settlement by obtaining a cease-fire and obtaining it on the best possible terms. The best terms can be assured if the Secretary is there.

Mendes-France said that if there were big differences between the US and France, he could understand the US not being there, but this was not the case. The Secretary replied that the French might have to give in to very onerous Communist terms and he would fully understand that it might well be necessary for France to make peace terms which the US could not approve. He would not want to place himself in the position of having publicly to denounce the terms. He would not want France to say that it will stand on the seven points only if the US will fight as an alternative. Mendes-France replied that he would not ask this "for the time being" and said that if France does not stick to the substance of the seven points whether the Secretary is in Geneva or Washington, he would probably have to disavow the settlement, and he understood this fact. He was not prepared to say that on some points of detail the present French position might not compromise but he had no thought of compromise of any of the points on which, in the Secretary's letter to him of July 11th,[3] the Secretary indicated he understood the French positions were shifting. He said with great earnestness that if a US Minister comes to Geneva and France signs something which the US feels it necessary to disavow, he would take the responsibility. He then solemnly said that in his official capacity "I ask you to come and help us." The Secretary stated that he fully appreciated the weight of the Prime Minister's request, he would defer his reply.

There was then some discussion of the type of statement the US could make with regard to any settlement at Geneva within the framework of the seven points, in which Mendes-France said that all France asked was that the US make a unilateral statement that it will take action if the Communist break any settlement that is reached. Mendes-France suggested something along the lines that the US would "view with grave concern any action from any country which will endanger the maintenance of peace in Indochina". The Secretary said that a unilateral declaration something along these lines would present no problem.

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[3] For the text of the message, see telegram 127 to Paris, July 10, p. 1807.

At the close (approximately 12:30 a. m.) the Secretary expressed his great appreciation for such a frank talk, which he felt was long overdue, and it was agreed that another meeting would be held July 14 at 11:30 a. m. at the Quai d'Orsay.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Coordinator of the United States Delegation at the Geneva Conference (Johnson)[1]

SECRET PARIS, July 14, 1954.

Participants:

The Secretary	M. Mendes-France
Ambassador Dillon	M. Parodi
Mr. MacArthur	M. Guerin de Beaumont
Mr. Phleger	M. Latournelle
Mr. McCardle	M. de Margerie
Ambassador Johnson	M. Folin

Mr. Eden
Sir Harold Caccia
Sir Gladwyn Jebb
Sir Anthony Rumbold

The meeting was very informal, with at times discussions going on between the Secretary and Mendes-France, the Secretary and Eden, and all three.

The Secretary first discussed with Mendes-France a letter to be addressed by Mendes-France to the Secretary confirming the discussions and undertakings that had been reached. Mendes-France agreed with the conclusion of a draft presented by the Secretary but indicated that he desired more fully to include the French position.[2]

There was also a discussion of a joint French–US position paper of which the Secretary showed Mendes-France a draft.[3] The discussion of this paper centered principally around respective positions with regard to bringing the matter of Indochina to the UN if there was no agreement at Geneva, and French intentions and policies concerning the independence of the Associated States. During this discussion the Secretary pointed out the dilemma with which France faced any US efforts to be of assistance. On the one hand, the French claimed that Indochina was an internal affair which could not be brought before the UN, and on the other hand, wanted assistance from the outside. The US could not be in the position of assisting a French colonial war in Indochina. Mendes-France replied that the Indochina affair was at the beginning a colonial war, but outside influences were more and more coming into the situation and it was no longer an entirely internal affair. However, with respect to bringing the matter to the UN, France had to consider the situation if trouble broke out in another French territory and the precedent that would be established if the matter of Indochina were brought to the UN.

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[1] This meeting took place at the Quai d'Orsay from 11:30 a. m. to 1:30 p. m.

[2] The U.S. draft has not been found, but for the letter actually transmitted by Premier Mendès-France to Secretary Dulles on July 14, see p. 1832.

[3] The U.S. draft has not been found, but for the approved text of the joint position paper, July 14, see p. 1830.

With respect to the American draft of the position paper, to the effect that France reaffirms its intention to reaffirm genuine independence to the Associated States and would not forcibly prevent any of the States from withdrawing from the French Union, Mendes stated that France had many times expressed its intention with respect to the independence of the Associated States, and in addition there was no problem with respect to Laos and Cambodia with which treaties were completed and in effect.

With respect to forcibly preventing their withdrawal, he pointed out the constitution of the French Union did not make any positive provision for secession therefrom, and it was therefore beyond his constitutional power to make any such statement.

Mr. Eden stated that he thought the question of Vietnamese independence was very fundamental in the present situation and the Vietnamese had said to him that unless the question of their independence was resolved, there would be no hope of holding any part of retained Vietnam. The Secretary also expressed the view that there was no chance of holding Vietnam unless they were granted real independence. Mendes-France said the question is what is to be done if there is a cease-fire. Neither the separate authorities in the north nor in the south would have the right to speak in the name of all the country. Only a future unified government would be able to do that. However, he fully recognized the importance of developing a strong nationalist government in the south of Vietnam even if in the beginning this gives rise to difficulties for France.

Mendes said he fully realized the urgency of doing something in this regard both in the civilian and military fields and that France must take political and psychological measures which will give the Vietnamese in the retained portion of Vietnam prestige and popularity and they would also need outside aid. It was extremely important that Vietnamese in this area be able to present themselves as representing a truly national movement.

It was decided that a working group would redraft the proposed letter and the joint position paper.

There was then discussion regarding whether General Smith's health would permit his presiding at Geneva. However, Mendes expressed the view that the important thing was not the exact date General Smith was able to arrive, but that they be able now to say that he was coming. The Secretary said that if General Smith was not able to come, it might be possible for him to return for a two or three-day period, but he explained that the situation in Congress with national and foreign aid and other legislation of importance to the area made it imperative that he be in Washington and also that he fully explain to Congressional leaders the results of the conversations held here.

Mendes said that the cease-fire act "has to be done by Tuesday".[4] That is when the date upon which the cease-fire was to go into effect must be published. After that the Conference can go on as long as it likes with regard to technical matters. If he deviates in any way from his determination that this be done by Tuesday, it will mean that the French will be involved in another Panmunjom. The Secretary pointed out that "technical matters" could be of very great importance.

The discussion was recessed until 3 p. m.[5]

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[4] July 20.

[5] Following this meeting, Secretary Dulles called President Eisenhower to inform him that agreements had been reached which would require Under Secretary Smith to return to Geneva, if that were all right with the President. The President said it was all right. (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file)

751G.00/7–1454

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

SECRET PARIS, July 14, 1954.

During the course of the discussions at the Embassy this afternoon,[1] Ambassador Johnson suggested to Secretary Dulles that he felt that Mr. Mendes-France and Mr. Eden might not fully comprehend the position of the US with reference to "guaranteeing" a settlement which would turn over much of Vietnam to the Communists. Thereupon, Secretary Dulles drew Mr. Mendes-France and Mr. Eden aside with him and said he wished to make it crystal clear that the US could never join in any guarantee to the Communists of the fruits of their aggression. The US did accept it as a fact that certain people became the victims of Communist aggression, and it was not prepared itself to go to war or to encourage others to go to war to rectify the situation. However, this was not the same as to say the US would become an ally of the Communists if there were a breach of this agreement by non-Communists.

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[1] No other U.S. record of the afternoon session at the American Embassy has been found. The final U.S.-French agreements were presumably approved at that time. In his memoirs, Eden states "The documents were put into shape, signed and exchanged after luncheon at the American Embassy. At that meeting the scene was one of friendly confusion, papers and luncheons and ladies all over the place." (Eden, *Full Circle*, p. 157)

It would be compatible with the foregoing that the US should make a unilateral declaration to the effect that in accordance with its obligations under the UN Charter, it would not resort to force to upset an agreement if it were arrived at, and it would seek to bring others to act correspondingly. Also the US could agree with others to react with force to Communist aggression in violation of the agreement. This, however, would have to be conditional upon Senate ratification of the treaty and/or Congressional approval of belligerency.

Mr. Mendes-France and Mr. Eden expressed their understanding of the US position. Mr. Eden stated that he hoped that the UK and others, including many South Asian countries, would be able to associate themselves with a declaration by the US against the use of force to overturn the Geneva agreements.

Ambassador Johnson and Mr. MacArthur were present during the above conversation.

[Annex]

United States-French Communiqué on the Paris Talks, July 13–14, 1954

[Paris, July 14, 1954.]

We have had intimate and frank discussions. These have resulted in a clear understanding of our respective positions in relation to Indochina.

The United States Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, explained fully the attitude of his Government toward the Indochinese phase of the Geneva Conference and the limitations which that government desired to observe as not itself having a primary responsibility in the Indochina war.

The French Premier and Foreign Minister, M. Pierre Mendes-France, expressed the view with which Mr. Anthony Eden, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for the United Kingdom, associated himself, that it would nevertheless serve the interests of France and of the Associated States, and of the peace and freedom of the area, if the United States, without departing from the principles which Mr. Dulles expressed, were once again to be represented at Geneva at the ministerial level.

Accordingly, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles are requesting the United States Under Secretary of State, General Walter Bedell Smith, to return to Geneva at an early date.

751G.00/7–1454

France–United States Position Paper[1]

CLASSIFIED

1. France and the Associated States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are recognized to be those which, on the non-Communist side, are primarily interested in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference.

The United States is interested primarily as a friendly nation which desires to assist, where desired, in arriving at a just settlement, but it will not seek, or be expected, to impose its views in any way upon those primarily interested.

2. The attached seven points constitute a result which France believes to be obtainable by negotiation at Geneva and which would be acceptable to France and, France believes, to the Associated States. The United States, while recognizing the right of those primarily interested to accept different terms, will itself be prepared to respect terms conforming to the attached. The United States will not be asked or expected by France to respect terms which in its opinion differ materially from the attached, and it may publicly disassociate itself from such differing terms.

3. If the settlement is one which the United States is prepared to "respect" its position will be expressed unilaterally or in association only with non-Communist states in terms which apply to the situation the principles of non-use of forces which are embodied in Article 2(4) and (6) of the Charter of the United Nations.

4. The United States is prepared to seek, with other interested

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[1] This joint position paper was approved by Secretary Dulles and Premier Mendès-France at Paris on July 14. The text was transmitted to Washington in telegram 179 from Paris, July 14. (751G.00/7–1454) The full text of telegram 179 is printed in *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam* [The Senator Gravel Edition], 4 vols. (Boston, Beacon Press, 1971), vol. I, pp. 554–557.

nations, a collective defense association designed to preserve, against direct and indirect aggression, the integrity of the non-Communist areas of Southeast Asia following any settlement.

5. If there is no settlement, the United States and French governments will consult together on the measures to be taken. This will not preclude the United States, if it so desires, bringing the matter before the United Nations as involving a threat to peace as dealt with by Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

6. France reaffirms the principle of independence for the Associated States in equal and voluntary association as members of the French Union.

MENDES-FRANCE JOHN FOSTER DULLES

[PARIS,] July 14, 1954.

[Annex]

MEMORANDUM OF POINTS REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF THE FRANCE–UNITED STATES POSITION PAPER

An agreement which:

1. preserves the integrity and independence of Laos and Cambodia and assures the withdrawal of Vietminh forces therefrom;

2. in connection with the line of military demarcation, preserves at least the southern half of Vietnam and if possible an enclave in the Delta; in this connection we would be unwilling to see the line of division of responsibility drawn further south than a line running generally west from Dong Hoi;

3. does not impose on Laos, Cambodia or retained Vietnam any restrictions materially impairing their capacity to maintain stable non-Communist regimes; and especially restrictions impairing their right to maintain adequate forces for internal security, to import arms and to employ foreign advisers;

4. does not contain political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area to Communist control;

5. does not exclude the possibility of the ultimate unification of the Vietnam by peaceful means;

6. provides for the peaceful and humane transfer, under international supervision, of those people desiring to be moved from one zone to another of Vietnam; and

7. provides effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES MENDES-FRANCE

JULY 14, 1954.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324

The French Prime Minister (Mendès-France) to the Secretary of State[1]

[Paris,] July 14, 1954.

Dear Mr. Secretary: Following our frank and friendly conversation of last evening,[2] I believe I understand fully the position of the United States with regard to the negotiations at Geneva concerning Indochina.

If I interpret your views correctly, you recognize fully the primary right of France, the Associated States of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to decide the conditions for the settlement of a war in which they are the only belligerents on the non-Communist side. You wish to aid us through your good offices in obtaining a just and honorable settlement which will take into account the needs of the interested peoples. However, you are not prepared to participate with the Communist countries in any settlement which might appear to retain for them the benefits of aggression or the domination of non-willing peoples. In any case, if a settlement should be arrived at between the parties holding the primary responsibility, you would agree to indicate that you would comply with the principles which are contained in Article 2 (4) and (6) of the United Nations Charter and you would consider any violation of the settlement by the Communist regimes as being of grave concern.

It being your belief that the continuation of the war would involve a serious risk of an extension of the conflict, both as concerns the combat areas and the belligerent countries, the question of the participation of the United States would be guided by the terms defined in the fourth paragraph of the letter addressed on July [*June*] 16, 1954, by President Eisenhower to President Coty.[3]

You have indicated to me that you would fear, in the present state of negotiations, that the sending by the United States to Geneva of representatives chosen at a high level and bearing instructions from President Eisenhower to adhere to the principles noted above, could cause a situation capable of giving rise in France, under the most regrettable circumstances, to a feeling that our two countries are divided and that it might risk affecting seriously their good relations which are so important to the whole free world.

I have noted your hesitation to come to Geneva in the fear of having eventually to disassociate yourself from an agreement, or certain of its terms, which you might not be able to respect. This appears to me to be understandable, but in my opinion it does not respond to the situation. In effect, I have every reason to think that your absence would be precisely interpreted as demonstrating, before the fact, that you disapproved of the conference and of everything which might be accomplished. Not only would those who are against us find therein the confirmation of the ill will which they attribute to your government concerning the re-establishment of peace in Indochina; but many others would read in it a sure sign of a division of the western powers. Finally, the negotiations would thus be deprived of the element of balance indispensable to the seeking of a solution as recommended in the memorandum of June 30.[4]

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[1] The source text is an unofficial translation which is filed with the signed French original. This translation was sent to Washington in telegram 179 from Paris, July 14. (751G.00/7–1454; *Pentagon Papers* [Gravel Edition], vol. I, pp. 554–557)

[2] For memorandum of conversation, see p. 1819.

[3] For the text of the fourth paragraph of the letter from Eisenhower to Coty, June 16, see footnote 1, p. 1720. The correct date of June 16 appears in the French original signed by Premier Mendès-France. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324)

I consider thus that such an absence would produce an effect diametrically opposed to the intentions which you have expressed and which I have cited above. In a situation as difficult as this only the unity of the western diplomatic front, supported by the immense potential which we have in common, can bring about the very military and strategic unity which we should seek eventually to establish in that part of the world.

It is in this spirit that French Government envisages, aside from the assurances which the conference itself could furnish, the establishment of a collective guarantee by virtue of which the signatories would declare themselves prepared to intervene if, in Indochina, one of the three states was a victim of aggression.

I am fully conscious of the position of the Government of the United States and I have noted with care the consequence which it might imply; but for the reasons which I have just enumerated, I have the profound conviction that the common interests of our two countries and of the three Associated States would be effectively defended only if you, yourself, or the Under-Secretary should represent in person your government at Geneva.

If the situation should nevertheless evolve in a manner which would confirm your fears, I engage myself, on behalf of France, to make known publicly the conditions under which you have acceded to my request.

I do not wish to end this letter without telling you how much I have appreciated during the meeting, certainly fruitful for the future of Franco-American relations, the way in which you have been able to join firmness and sureness of your political views to a broad understanding of the positions of your friends.[5]

[File copy not signed]

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[4] Reference is to the U.S.–U.K. communication to the French Government which was transmitted to Paris in telegram 4853 of June 28 (p. 1757) and actually delivered on June 30.

[5] On the original signed copy of this letter, the final paragraph is a handwritten addition by Premier Mendès-France. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324)

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324

The Secretary of State to the French Prime Minister (Mendès-France)[1]

PARIS, July 14, 1954.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I have received your letter of July 14[2] with reference to participation by the United States in the final stages of the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference.

In the light of what you say and after consultation with President Eisenhower, I am glad to be able to inform you that the President is asking the Under Secretary of State, General Walter Bedell Smith, to prepare to return at his earliest convenience to Geneva to share in the work of the Conference on the basis of the understanding which we have arrived at.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity which we have had to confer together, and I believe that it has added a new chapter to the honorable and precious tradition of Franco-American cooperation.

Sincerely yours, JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[1] The text of this letter was transmitted to Washington in telegram 179 from Paris, July 14. (751G.00/7-1454; *Pentagon Papers* [Gravel Edition], vol. I, pp. 554–557) Copies of the letters exchanged by Dulles and Mendès-France were provided to Foreign Secretary Eden by the French Premier. Eden acknowledged receipt by letter of July 14. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 324) Eden's letter was also included in telegram 179 from Paris of July 14.

[2] *Supra.*

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 206th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, July 15, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Present at the 206th Meeting of the Council were The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States;

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on July 16.

Secretary Dulles returned from Paris at 9:15 a. m., July 15, and proceeded to the White House to brief the President and the NSC. (Princeton University, Dulles papers, "Daily Appointments") The Hagerty diary entry for July 15 read in part as follows: "Prior to the time that the President arrived at the White House Dulles and I had a rather long talk on the situation. He said that he thought that he had made the American position quite clear to the French and British; namely, that we did not particularly like the idea of the partition of Vietnam but would go along with it if they agreed to support the American effort to form promptly in the Far East area a Southeast Asian Treaty Organization. He said he thought it was probably the best thing that Bedell Smith was returning to Geneva since without Bedell there, we would lose a forum for world opinion. Since I had been urging this all along, I was very happy to hear the Secretary say it." (Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers) the Secretary of State (for Item 2 only); the Under Secretary of State (Items 1 and 3–7); Robert B. Anderson for the Secretary of Defense; the Acting Director, Foreign Operations Administration; the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Attorney General (Item 1); the Acting Secretary of the Interior (Item 4); the Secretary of Commerce (Item 1); Under Secretary of Commerce Worthy (Item 1); Assistant Secretary of Commerce Anderson (Item 3); the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Item 1); the Administrator, Federal Facilities Corporation (Item 3); the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; the White House Staff Secretary; the NSC Representative on Internal Security (Item 1); the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

Following is a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

. . . .

2. *Report by the Secretary of State* [2]

The President said that he wished to hear from the Secretary of State next.

A. *EDC and Germany.*

. . . .

B. *Indochina.*

Secretary Dulles began by explaining the dilemma which had confronted the United States with respect to participation at a high level in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference. He said that we had been reluctant thus to participate, in the first instance, out of fear that the Communists might say to the French that they would be willing to accept a certain solution of the Indochina problem provided the United States joined in guaranteeing such a solution. Had the United States been faced with such a proposition, we would have had to reject it, said Secretary Dulles. We couldn't get ourselves into the "Yalta business" of guaranteeing Soviet conquests, but to have rejected such a proposal would nevertheless have left us exposed to the hostility of French public opinion as the power responsible for blocking a settlement of the unpopular Indochinese war. There would have been more talk of too many stiff-necked Presbyterians, of sanctimoniousness, and of invoking lofty moral principles.

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[2] For the statement issued by the Secretary on the occasion of his return from Paris, see Department of State *Bulletin*, July 26, 1954, pp. 123–124.

The other danger—the other horn of the dilemma—was the possibility that high-level U.S. representation at Geneva might so stiffen the French as to preclude their accepting any settlement offered by the Communists. They might then turn to us and ask us to participate unilaterally with them in continuing the war.

In the event that either of these two possibilities had been realized, the result would have been very great French antagonism. The whole structure of Franco–U.S. friendship might have been destroyed, and there would have been an end of any hope for EDC. These reasons had led us to believe that it was wisest for the United States to withdraw from the Indochina phase of the Conference inconspicuously. We had found, however, that we could not withdraw inconspicuously. There had been very strong French pressure on us to return to Geneva. Secretary Dulles said that his letter to Mendes-France, setting forth his reasons for not wishing to go to Geneva, had not convinced the French Premier.[3] When the Premier's reply had been received Monday afternoon (July 12, 1954) imploring a return to Geneva, Secretary Dulles decided to go to Paris, and left at 6:00 p. m.[4]

Secretary Dulles said that he had spent most of the time at Tuesday's meeting discussing the United States viewpoint on Indochina with the French.[5] They in turn had gone into considerable detail in outlining the settlement they wanted to get and thought they could get from the Communists. The original Vietminh proposal called for a partition of Vietnam at approximately the 14th parallel. Subsequently, however, they had expressed a willingness to draw the line at the 16th parallel. Mendes-France told Secretary Dulles that he thought this Vietminh concession was the result of news that Secretary Dulles was coming to Paris. In any event, Mendes-France said that he had rejected the line of the 16th parallel because it would have cost the French their important base at Tourane, the port city of Hue, and the only road from Vietnam into Laos which was not controlled by the Communists. Instead, said Mendes-France, they had stood on their demand that the partition line in Vietnam should run roughly from Dong Hoi to Thakek, together with freedom and territorial integrity for Laos and Cambodia. At the conclusion of the meeting Tuesday night, Mendes-France had made a moving plea for United States high-level representation at Geneva. Secretary Dulles had replied that he would consider the matter and give his answer on the following day.

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[3] The message under reference is contained in telegram 127 to Paris, July 10, p. 1807.

[4] The reply from Premier Mendès-France to which Secretary Dulles refers has not been identified. Regarding the events of July 12 culminating in the departure of Dulles for Paris, see footnote 1, p. 1812.

[5] For the record of the meeting of Tuesday evening, July 13, see p. 1819.

During the remainder of that night Secretary Dulles and those who had accompanied him to Paris prepared two papers. The first of these was the draft of a French–U.S. position paper. This position paper was substantially the same as the position we had agreed with when Churchill and Eden had visited Washington (copy, entitled "Instructions Regarding Reply to French Government", filed in the minutes of the meeting).[6] Secretary Dulles summarized the paper as providing for the independence and integrity of the southern half of Vietnam and of all of Laos and Cambodia. Secretary Dulles informed the Council that the United States did not propose to guarantee a settlement based on this 7-point position paper, but that we would be prepared to agree not to resort to the use of armed force to change such a settlement if the French and the Communists agreed to it. The United States would simply make a unilateral declaration of this intent.

The second paper prepared after the interview with Mendes-France Tuesday night, took the form of a letter which Mendes-France would send to Secretary Dulles.[7] Secretary Dulles read this letter aloud. It set forth the substance of the French and the U.S. positions, and indicated a commitment by Mendes-France to make a public statement to the French people which would make it perfectly clear that we had come to Geneva at his urging and accordingly were not responsible for any result which might lead the people of France to accuse us of preventing the achieving of a settlement in Indochina, either through our refusal to guarantee a settlement with the Communists or through our support of a position which resulted in a French decision to go on fighting (the two contingencies mentioned by Secretary Dulles earlier in this report). Thus we hoped to avoid any crisis in Franco–American relations.

The upshot was an agreement by Secretary Dulles that General Smith should return to Geneva to represent the United States for the remainder of the Conference. While, said Secretary Dulles, this decision will involve some risk, at least the United States will be going back with an agreed position with France, as well as with a clear position with respect to our responsibility or lack of responsibility for the final outcome of the negotiations. Secretary Dulles was not optimistic, he said, regarding the results of the Conference; that as among the several risky courses of action open to the United States at this time, the one chosen involved the least risk.

In conclusion, Secretary Dulles said he wished to emphasize that from the psychological standpoint our decision to return had been a grave blow to the Communists. The fact that the entire Geneva Conference had ground to a standstill when Mendes-France left for Paris to talk to an American Secretary of State, and that Chou En-lai and Molotov had cooled their heels during this interval, had punctured the Communist prestige which had been built up so high at Geneva. All this indicated that when it really comes down to something important, the United States is the key nation. This had been a matter of great chagrin to the Communists.

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[6] The agreed instructions were transmitted to Paris in telegram 4853 of June 28; for text, see p. 1757. For the text of the U.S.-French position paper as approved on July 14, see p. 1830.

[7] For the text of the letter, dated July 14, see p. 1832.

At the conclusion of Secretary Dulles' report the President inquired whether Mendes-France appeared to have any grasp of the fact that no matter what kind of agreement the French reached with the Communists, the French must have the complete confidence of the native peoples of Indochina if the agreement was going to work. Secretary Dulles replied that the President's point has been one of the seven points in the French–U.S. position paper. Another significant point in that paper had been a French admission that we could bring the Indochina situation before the UN if the final result of the Geneva Conference was no settlement. It had been hard to induce Mendes-France to agree to this step, because of the French insistence that the war in Indochina was a civil war. Secretary Dulles, however, had pointed out that the French could not have it both ways. If this was merely a civil war, the United States had no business participating in it; it was not our custom to intervene in other people's civil wars. With respect to the issue of the independence of the Associated States, Secretary Dulles said he had also had a hard time with Mendes-France, particularly on the point as to whether the granted independence implied the right to withdraw from the French Union. Here Mr. Eden had been a great help. He had joined with Secretary Dulles to impress upon Mendes-France the necessity for creating and developing a "national effort" by the governments and peoples of the Associated States. To succeed in this would eventually require not only the departure of French troops but of French civil functionaries from the Associated States. To get the French to agree to this had been difficult because of their pride in the French Union. Mendes-France himself, however, seemed to be closer to the British view as to the relation of nations in the Commonwealth to the mother country than Laniel. All he could say, continued Secretary Dulles, was that while the position of Mendes-France may not square 100% with our position, he was much closer to our position on this matter than his predecessors.

Secretary Dulles again paid tribute to the sincerity and honesty of Mendes-France, and predicted that he would offer his resignation as Premier on July 20 if no agreement on Indochina had been reached at Geneva by that date.

Secretary Humphrey expressed the opinion that the most important gain that Secretary Dulles had achieved by virtue of his visit to Paris was to put Mendes-France under obligation to the United States, particularly with respect to Germany. If Mendes-France proved to be honest, and grasped the assistance we were giving him on Indochina, there was hope for a decent German settlement.

Discussion then shifted to the probable Congressional and public reaction to the results of Geneva and to Secretary Dulles' role. The Vice President stated that while he had been at the Governors' Conference recently, two or three Republican Governors had spoken to him in very favorable terms of Secretary Dulles' trip to Paris. They had described it as a shrewd and even a brilliant maneuver. As to reactions in the future, the attitude of Congress, said the Vice President, would largely depend on two things. First, how the press played the matter, and second, how certain of the prominent Republican members of Congress played it. The Vice President believed that it was important to put both the newspapers and the members of Congress on the spot by asking them what they would have done under the circumstances. Very few of the critics would be able to provide a better answer to the problem than the Administration had provided. The Vice President also thought it extremely important that when the Geneva settlement was announced, it be framed in very simple terms which would clearly indicate the alternatives which had confronted the United States. The Administration should also take the offensive by stressing the advantages which had been gained from the settlement; for example, emphasizing the independence and integrity of Laos and Cambodia. This, thought the Vice President, was the way to sell it. Secretary Dulles commented that we must be careful not to go too far to make the forthcoming settlement appear to be a good bargain.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Anderson asked about the likely fate of the large stores of munitions and matériel which had been sent to Indochina by the United States. Had the French agreed that this matériel could be evacuated? Secretary Dulles said that this question had not been specifically discussed, but he believed that the French intended to try to hold the port of Haiphong for a considerable time, which would provide the means of evacuating some of this matériel.

Admiral Radford inquired whether the Vietnamese Government would ever agree to a settlement by the French along the lines indicated by Secretary Dulles. Secretary Dulles replied that he believed that the governments of Laos and Cambodia would find the proposed settlement quite satisfactory, but it was difficult to tell how the Government of Vietnam would react. He said he had met briefly with the Foreign Minister of Vietnam as he was about to leave Paris for Washington.[8] He was not very happy about the prospect. The Foreign Minister was a Catholic and had come from one of the Delta provinces recently turned over to the Vietminh. The worst of the situation, said Secretary Dulles, was that the most virile elements of the Vietnamese population lived in the Tonkin Delta area. It might be possible to transfer a few of the natives of the Delta to the non-Communist areas, but probably not many.

Admiral Radford went on to say that one of the most dangerous features of the proposed settlement was the likelihood of severe Vietnamese revulsion against the French when the terms were finally announced. Such a revulsion could be very serious indeed if the native troops turned against the French. After all, half of the native troops of Vietnam came from the Delta area. Mr. Allen Dulles likewise expressed the opinion that a Vietnamese uprising against the French was quite possible when the terms of the settlement were announced.

As an afterthought, Secretary Dulles said that he wanted to point out that Mendes-France had informed him that if the Geneva Conference proved to be a failure, the French would have two divisions from NATO which they could send to Indochina. It would be impossible to get them there, however, before the end of September, and it might be impossible to hold the Hanoi–Haiphong bridgehead over this period of time without U.S. air and sea support.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral report by the Secretary of State on his recent conferences in Paris with the French Premier and the UK Foreign Secretary, with particular reference to EDC and Indochina.

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[8] Reference is presumably to a meeting between Secretary Dulles and Tran Van Chuong, Vietnamese Minister of State and Ambassador at Large, at Paris on July 14, during which Chuong presented the Secretary with a memorandum protesting the French evacuation of the Catholic areas of North Vietnam. The conversation and the memorandum were summarized in telegram 219 from Paris, July 16. (751G.00/7-1654) The text of the memorandum was transmitted to Washington in despatch 147 from Paris, July 20. (751G.00/7-2054)

751G.00/7-1654 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL

SAIGON, July 16, 1954—4 p. m.
[Received 6:54 a. m.]

202. Repeated information Paris 79, Geneva 42, Hanoi 56. We are told by AP correspondent Roderick that news stories filed from Hanoi yesterday on exchange of wounded prisoners were subject to double censorship in Saigon and original stories were very much altered before released by military censors here. Correspondents had de-

scribed 600 kilometer journey of French wounded as a "death march." According to their reports approximately 15 prisoners died each day on long march by foot from prison camp near Dien Bien Phu. Stories likewise described physical condition of prisoners as catastrophic.

Official reason given by French military censors Saigon in insisting that stories be much toned down were, (*a*) news of this sort would needlessly distress families of prisoners and (*b*) such dispatches might lessen chances of getting other prisoners exchanged. However, it is generally believed that real motivation was not to permit any stories to be filed at this time which might endanger chances of negotiating cease-fire at Geneva.[1]

HEATH

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[1] In telegram 230 from Saigon, July 18, Heath added the following: "Censorship story from returned Dien Bien Phu prisoners continues. French releasing story but deleting 'death march.' Also quashing statement that returnees expect all unreturned comrades to die from cholera, dysentery and malnutrition. Believed here that French want neither to anger Viet Minh nor excite West into doing anything endangering settlement." (751G.00/7-1854)

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations"

Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and Congressman John M. Vorys of Ohio[1]

[WASHINGTON,] July 16, 1954—11:58 a.m.

V. said he is worried—he is to be interviewed for *Capitol Cloakroom* this p.m. and knows they will ask about EDC, Indochina etc. V. brought up "guaranteeing". The Sec. said we would act towards an Armistice in Indochina as towards the one in Korea. We would not go to war, but we are free to work peacefully against it. We will defend the armistice lines in Korea. In IC with others we will defend the line but we won't break it. If the armistice is not respectable, we will disassociate ourselves from it. V. mentioned Locarno—the Secretary explained what it means.

V. said he can't understand this last trip. The Sec. said the basis for our position is Article 2 of the UN Charter. We are after SEATO to hold all non-Communist portions of the area. The Sec. said if the French get the result they think they can, we are lucky. V. said he thinks the result of the trip and the trip are not good. The Sec. said if he knew the whole story he would think it is good. The Sec. said he has been very tough on this whole proposition.

V. still wasn't convinced and the Sec. said we could have run out entirely—then there would have been total disaster in Indochina and

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[1] Drafted by Phyllis D. Bernau of the office of the Secretary of State. The call originated with Vorys.

Europe. The Sec. said no to making any guarantee to the Communists for concessions they might make. If France didn't have something to lean on, our Franco-American relations might have blown up. This that we have done will avoid disastrous results, and the Sec. said it might have good results.

The Sec.'s basis for action is to go to war only to stop aggression—not to remedy every inequity in the world. The Sec. again referred to living up to Article 2 of the Charter—and that is in black and white. The Sec. said not to think he has sold out, because he hasn't.[2]

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[2] Secretary Dulles reiterated his position during a telephone conversation with Henry R. Luce, Director of Time, Inc., on the morning of July 17. The record of the Secretary's remarks during that conversation read in part as follows: "The program is far from a sellout. Our own position is somewhat weakened by the fact that we don't want to push them in a war where we are not sure we want to stand beside them and fight. We don't want to guarantee the Commies the fruits of their aggression. It will not be a sellout—but it will be a partial surrender. It is a question of whether the military settlement is so defined that the Communist success is limited to what they gained on the field of battle or whether they are going to gain much more than that through conditions which will undermine the integrity of Laos, Cambodia and Southern Vietnam and the will to go on fighting. The question is whether they are willing to stick to terms that reflect the military situation. The Sec. thinks they will stand on terms so we can move in there and bolster their position." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

751G.00/7-1654 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, July 16, 1954—9 p. m.
[Received 2:18 p. m.]

214. Repeated information Geneva 44, Paris 83, Hanoi unnumbered. I saw Ngo Dinh Diem this morning. He said he had no real idea what was occurring in Geneva. The French delegation there was obviously not keeping his Foreign Minister informed. He asked me what would happen if he rejected agreement reached by the French with the Viet Minh; what would be the US reaction? I said the question was highly hypothetical. It depended on what the terms of the agreement were. I had informed him of the American-British understanding, resulting from the Washington talks as to the minimum assurance which an accord with the Viet Minh must present before we would engage to respect it. Rejection of an agreement on his part would be a grave step not to be undertaken lightly. One solid fact of this situation was the French Expeditionary Corps of 185,000 men which could not be replaced at the present time by any power or combination of powers. Neither could the Vietnamese National Army in its present state of training, discipline and strength hope to do battle on even terms with the Viet Minh Forces in the north at least. Diem then said that he would insist that the line of demarcation be at the

18th parallel. He would reject any line south of that which incidentally would give the Viet Minh two capitals, Hanoi and Hue as well as the port and airfield of Tourane. He said he would insist if Hanoi could not be retained for "remaining Vietnam" that it and the southern provinces in the Tonkin delta be internationalized; their future to be decided by an eventual plebiscite or elections.

As regards elections he would insist that they not be held for two years. He understood the Soviets were asking for elections twelve months after cease-fire. That was too short a date.

2. In addition to his troubles and misgivings over the course of events at Geneva, he was having extreme difficulties with the Binh Xuyen sect which controls the Security Police, with the Army under General Hinh, son of ex-Prime Minister Tam whom Cochin Chinese separatists and certain French financial interests were intriguing to make president of a southern Vietnamese republic and Cao Daists and Hoa Haos.

He was determined to get rid of the Binh Xuyen who were simply "gangsters" of the worst sort. He would eventually succeed and eventually he would do away with their gambling concession which furnished most of their funds. Unfortunately this concession also paid the state taxes amounting to 200 million piasters annually. If he suppressed legalized gambling he asked whether the US would make good the loss in revenue to the state for a year. I said that obviously we could not do just that but it might be that our economic assistance and the budgetary assistance for Vietnamese defense, which so far we had been providing through the French Government, would enable him to do without the gambling tax.

He said he was equally determined to get rid of Hinh but he could not do so at this moment. Actually the only "security" of his government at the present time was that furnished by the French Union Forces.

3. Returning to the Geneva conference he said that he would flatly reject any suggestion the Viet Minh be allowed to enter a coalition government or any coalition arrangements. It was impossible to work with or indeed negotiate with the Viet Minh. They were no longer nationalists but international Communists.

HEATH

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 301

The Secretary of State to the Under Secretary of State (*Smith*)

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, July 16, 1954.

MY DEAR GENERAL SMITH: The following basic instructions, which have been approved by the President, will guide you as head of the United States Delegation in your participation in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference for which you are leaving today.[1]

1. I append hereto as Annex A a Six Point France–United States Position Paper, dated July 14, 1954.[2] Attached thereto is a Seven Point Memorandum setting out the terms which the French Government states it believes are obtainable at Geneva by negotiation, and which would be acceptable to France, and France believes, to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.[3]

2. The United States recognizes that these four nations have a direct and primary interest as belligerents which entitles them to negotiate a settlement without any coercion or pressure from the United States. As stated in the Position Paper, the United States will not seek "to impose its views in any way upon those primarily interested", i.e., France and Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

3. Therefore, your role at the Conference will be that of the representative of a nation friendly to the non-Communist states primarily interested, which desires to assist, where desired, in arriving at a just settlement. You will not, however, go beyond this role.

4. If there is a cease-fire, armistice or political settlement which conforms substantially to the seven points referred to in the annexed Position Paper, and which is agreed to by the states primarily interested, you are authorized to make a declaration of the attitude of the United States in the form of the annexed declaration, marked Annex B. This will be a unilateral declaration, unless certain of the non-Communist states desire to associate themselves with it, in which case this is acceptable. The United States will not, however, become cosignatory with the Communists in any Declaration.

5. You will note that the Position Paper states that if the terms of settlement differ materially from those set out in the Seven Points, the United States will not be asked or expected by France to respect those terms and "it may publicly disassociate itself from such differing terms."

6. In the event that you are in doubt as to whether the settlement conforms substantially to, or differs materially from, the Seven Points referred to in the Position Paper, you will seek instructions before either refusing to make the declaration contemplated by the above paragraph numbered 4 or publicly disassociating the United States as contemplated by the above paragraph numbered 5. Of course, before taking any important action which could have serious repercussions upon our international relations, you will naturally communicate with me.

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[1] Under Secretary Smith departed for Geneva on the afternoon of July 16.

[2] For text, see p. 1830.

[3] For text, see p. 1831.

7. You will avoid participation in the negotiations in any way which would imply, or give the Communists a plausible case for contending, that the United States was so responsible for the result that it is in honor bound to guarantee that result to the Communists. We apprehend that the Communists might offer to make certain concessions if the United States would then guarantee the settlement so far as they were concerned. You should, so far as possible, avoid getting yourself into a position which would lend itself to such a Communist maneuver. Accordingly, the non-Communist belligerents, rather than the United States, should be the active negotiators, and such ideas as we have should be put forward to the French or Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, as may be appropriate, and through them to the Conference if they find it desirable to adopt such ideas as their own.

8. Also, since the United States is not prepared at the present time to give any commitment that it will intervene in the war if the Geneva Conference fails—the United States position in this respect is set out in President Eisenhower's letter of June 16, 1954, to President Coty [4]—you should avoid as far as possible exerting any pressures or giving advice to the French of such a character that, if there is no cease-fire, the French can plausibly contend that it is because of our advice to, or pressure upon, them, and that therefore we are morally obligated to intervene at once in a military way.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

[Annex A]

[Here follow the France–United States Position Paper of July 14, 1954, and its attachment—the Memorandum of Points Referred to in Paragraph 2 of the France–United States Position Paper.]

[Annex B]

Draft Declaration by the Government of the United States [5]

[WASHINGTON,] July 16, 1954.

The Government of the United States being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with principles and purposes of the United Nations

Takes note of the Agreements concluded at Geneva on (date) ------ between the ------ military commands

Declares with regard to aforesaid Agreement that

(i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Art. 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of Members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force; and

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[4] For the pertinent portion of the text of the letter, see footnote 1, p. 1720.

[5] The copy of this draft in the Dulles papers at the Eisenhower Library bears the handwritten initials of President Eisenhower indicating approval.

(ii) it will seek that other states which are not members of the United Nations shall similarly refrain from the use of force, in accordance with the Art. 2(6) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with insuring that states which are not members of the United Nations shall act in accordance with the principles of the Charter so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security; and [6]

(iii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of these agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

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[6] The following marginal notation appears opposite subparagraph two on the source text: "Deletion recommended by Secretary. Tosec 560." Telegram Tosec 560 to Geneva, July 17, read as follows: "For Under Secretary from Secretary. Upon reflection and in view of reactions here, believe that Subparagraph 2 of US Declaration Annex B should, if at all possible, be eliminated as subject to misconstruction. Suggest you inform Phleger." (396.1 GE/7–1754) Regarding the declaration actually issued by the United States at Geneva on July 21, see editorial note, p. 1859.

751G.00/7–1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, July 17, 1954—1 p. m.

220. Repeated information Geneva 48, Paris 87, Hanoi unnumbered. Cerles, Diplomatic Counselor to French Commissioner General, informs me that last night General Ely telegraphed Mendes-France in strongest terms urging him that partition line be fixed at 18th Parallel. Ely stated that a line drawn at 16th Parallel would present gravest military problems since the only practical road to Laos, RC–19, would be in Viet Minh hands, as well as the all-important airport and port of Tourane and the whole flank of Laos would be exposed. Apart from military considerations the political effects of the line below 18th Parallel would be extremely grave. Cerles expressed hope that our government would also insist on 18th Parallel. He went on to say that he was convinced by his own observation at Geneva Conference that the Communist delegation, after bargaining, would accept that line.

That is my own belief and Embassy feels strongly that any line below that point would be disastrous. Department will recall from my telegram 214 of July 16 that Ngo Dinh Diem says he would reject any "demarcation line" below 18th Parallel.

HEATH

751G.00/7–1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, July 17, 1954—11 p. m.

226. Repeated information Paris 89, Geneva 49. Re Deptel sent Geneva Tosec 557, Saigon 210, July 16.[1] I have deliberately not seen Diem since yesterday morning, but my present guess is that even if military agreement does not provide northern enclave, Diem will not pull out of Geneva, resign or undertake independent action in Vietnam, provided we use our influence to persuade him not to reject the agreement. By "using our influence" we would have to assure him that we cannot accept loss of northern areas as final but as provisional separation dictated by military necessity. We would have to assure him of our building up the Vietnam National Army as well as increased economic assistance, to handle refugee resettlement and other problems. I believe a clinching argument would be decision our part to send a training mission for the Vietnamese National Army as agreed between Generals Ely and O'Daniel. We may expect Diem to insist that the Hanoi and the southern Tonkin delta provinces be placed under the administration of the International Control Commissions, but he may recede from that stand if he can be assured that population of Hanoi and of those provinces will have unrestricted right to emigrate to remaining Vietnam.

HEATH

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[1] In the reference telegram, the Department of State requested the estimates of the Delegation at Geneva and the Embassy at Saigon regarding the intentions of the Vietnamese Government should the Conference settlement fail to provide for an enclave in North Vietnam. For text, see vol. XVI, p. 1397.

PSA files, lot 58 D 207

Report of the Joint United States–United Kingdom Study Group on Southeast Asia [1]

[Extract]

SECRET WASHINGTON, July 17, 1954.

Terms of Reference

By agreed minute of the meetings between the President and the Prime Minister a joint UK–US Study Group was established in

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[1] For documentation on the proceedings of the Study Group, including the portion of this report not printed here, see volume XII. The entire report may also be found in telegram Tosec 563 to Geneva, July 17; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 1410. Additional material on the work of the Joint Study Group is in file 751G.00.

Washington "to prepare agreed recommendations" with respect to Southeast Asia.[2]

Meetings and Membership

The Study Group held its first meeting July 7, 1954. In all the group held six meetings, the closing meeting being held on July 17. Chief US participants were General Walter Bedell Smith and Mr. Douglas MacArthur II. The chief UK participant was Mr. R. H. Scott.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are contained in the enclosed report to which are attached three annexes. The recommendations are submitted by the members of the Study Group without commitment on their respective Governments.

Publicity

The Group agreed that nothing should be said to the press about the work or the recommendations of the Group, and that the line should be taken that these meetings were technical and exploratory, without commitment on either side.

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, II
R. H. SCOTT

[Enclosure]

THE REPORT

ITEM I

Terms of Reference:[3]

"Assuming France–Associated States and Viet Minh reach agreements on Indochina, which the US and UK are willing to respect—

(*a*) the precise terms on which the UK and US might be willing to be associated with such agreements; and

(*b*) the basis on which the free Asian and other interested non-Communist states might be brought into association with the agreements."

1. There was discussion of the methods of association with such agreements. *The U.K. members* preferred a multilateral declaration to be signed by all the countries taking part in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference and as many other interested South and Southeast Asian states as possible. *The U.S. members* stated that pro-

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[2] The Agreed Minute of June 27 establishing the joint study group specified that agreement should be sought on terms for United States and United Kingdom association with the Geneva settlement, and on terms for a collective security pact for Southeast Asia depending on the outcome of the Geneva Conference. For text of the agreed minute, see volume XII or VI.

[3] The quotation which follows is taken from the Agreed Minute of June 27.

vided the agreements met U.S. specifications, the U.S., at the conclusion of the Geneva Conference, would be prepared to make a unilateral statement of U.S. policy to the effect that the U.S. would respect the agreements in the sense of applying thereto the non-force principles of Art. 2(4) and (6) of the UN Charter. The U.S. would gladly welcome non-Communist co-signers. *The U.S. members* were not prepared to envisage negotiating the terms of such a unilateral statement of U.S. policy either directly with the Communists at Geneva, or indirectly through discussion of the terms with the Indians or other countries.

2. *The U.S. members* defined an agreement which the U.S. could respect as being one which (*a*) in its view substantially fulfilled the seven points communicated to the French by the U.K. and U.S. and subsequently accepted by France (July 14, 1954);[4] and (*b*) the Associated States accepted.

3. *The United Kingdom members* pointed out that the United Kingdom would wish to make a declaration in a form which as many as possible of other interested States might feel able to use. Some of these countries might not be members of the United Nations, or not represented there. The United Kingdom might therefore wish to avoid too many detailed references to provisions of the Charter, and refer only to the general principles of the United Nations, in order to secure as wide agreement as possible on the substance and terms of a declaration in respect of an Indochina settlement.

4. On the assumption that agreements are reached on Indochina which the United States and United Kingdom members are willing to respect, *the UK members* stated that the free Asian and other non-Communist states should be encouraged to bring themselves into association with the agreements on the same basis as the US and the UK. *The UK members* considered that the first step in securing the support of these powers for a collective defence system would be to induce them to associate themselves with an Indochina settlement. This would not only help to make that settlement durable and effective; it would also be valuable in the event of violation and in the event of an appeal to the United Nations.

5. *The U.S. members* agreed that it would be valuable to have free Asian and other interested non-Communist states associate themselves with whatever declarations the US and the UK might make. The US members stated, however, that the value was not so great that the U.S. would be disposed to exert political pressure on other non-Communist countries to associate themselves with the declaration which the U.S. might make.

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[4] See U.S.-French position paper of July 14, p. 1830.

6. *Agreed Recommendations on Item I*

The Study Group agreed that provided agreements are reached which the two Governments can respect:—

a. The U.S. and U.K. should each issue a declaration of policy in respect of the agreements,

b. The terms of the U.S. and U.K. declarations should be as similar as possible.

c. These declarations should conform to the purposes and principles of the U.N. and should contain a statement that the issuing Government would not use force to disturb the agreements.

d. It would be desirable for as many interested non-Communist countries as possible to issue similar or identical declarations.

. . . .

751G.00/7–1854 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET Hanoi, July 18, 1954—5 p. m.

66. Repeated information Saigon 86, Paris 23. I called on Triumvirate [1] July 15 and took First Secretary Meloy along. We found stairs leading to office lined with tommygun carrying Vietnamese soldiers in battle dress and in office the Triumvirate lined up to receive us, Hoang-Co-Binh wearing military uniform without insignia. Dr. Binh did most of talking, Tran-Van-Dung joined in occasionally, General Van only when cued.

Binh said they had returned from Saigon on July 10 to find Hanoi "a lost city" from morale point of view. They had immediately assumed power and in several days of energetic action had restored confidence and felt that they had situation well in hand. Then referred to proclamation, radio address, posters and inspections as means they had used to restore popular morale. They urged us to report what in their minds was the marked change in atmosphere in Hanoi.

According Binh, committee has decided already on certain basic measures, including program political education, plans militarize Hanoi police force and formation youth organizations. He said they felt they had made good beginning and if they had six months that they could redress situation here.

General O'Daniel and I saw committee on July 16 and they returned the General's call at my house later same evening. Committee stressed importance holding present Hanoi–Haiphong complex and discussed their hope, if this occurred, to retake after several months preparation Bui Chu area by amphibious operation. I could get no clear idea from their discussion of what they might do in case negotiations resulted in partition. If the Annamese government recognizes such an agreement, they seemed to think that it would be impossible to persuade Vietnamese army units to leave for South even if their families could be moved there.

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[1] Reference is to the three officials provisionally in charge of the government of North Vietnam.

General O'Daniel instructed the committee in the military facts of life. He stressed as essential to both parties that Vietnamese and French maintain and strengthen their unity at this crucial moment. He urged committee take strenuous measures prevent desertions from Vietnamese units, pointing out that desertions since they were contagious could become even worse enemy at present time than Viet Minh.

Comments: I received a better impression of committee during sessions in which O'Daniel participated than when I had seen them previously. Am inclined to think, however, this was because O'Daniel brought them down to earth. Even assuming soundness of their approach, they are in an impossible position since time is rapidly running out for them.

Unfortunately for their claim that in several ways they have restored morale of Hanoi, we were here during this period and saw no change in atmosphere.

CAMERON

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President"

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] July 19, 1954.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT
Sunday, July 18, 1954—5:00 p.m.

I told the President that the cables which I have received this morning from Geneva indicated a likelihood that there would be an armistice concluded [1] and that I thought it might be useful to interject from here the idea that, if these negotiations failed, the United States would take so serious a view of the situation that the President would feel under a duty to make a report to the American people. I said that the knowledge that we would take this grave view of the situation would itself tend to buck up Mendes-France on the one hand and also lead the communists to make some concessions on the other hand.

The President raised the question of possibly going to a Joint Session of Congress. I said that I doubted whether this was advisable at the present time as we were not yet in a shape to ask for any authority from Congress whereas if he made a talk to the American people, he could speak in terms of personally supporting a presentation of the situation to the United Nations as a threat to the peace, and he could do so directly or with U.S. support through others, without Congressional authorization. Also I felt that at this juncture the important thing was to let the Geneva Conference know that the President would take a very grave view of the failure of the Conference as creating a likelihood of the war being intensified and enlarged, both in terms of the area of combat and of the belligerents.

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[1] The cables under reference have not been identified specifically. For certain telegrams received from the Delegation at Geneva on the morning of July 18, see vol. XVI, pp. 1424 ff.

The President agreed with this procedure and authorized me to inform General Smith who in turn would be authorized to let Mendes-France know. The President spoke over the telephone with Mr. Hagerty to find out whether he could probably get time on Wednesday night on an emergency basis if this seemed desirable. Hagerty indicated that he felt no doubt about this.[2]

After leaving the President I dispatched to General Smith a cable informing him of the President's intentions and authorizing him to inform Mendes-France which he did.[3] Subsequently on Monday morning I telephoned to General Smith to ascertain his views as to whether or not some announcement or "leak" should be made from here as to the President's possible speech. General Smith was of the opinion that matters were going better from the standpoint of prospective settlement and that what had already been done was sufficient. I informed the President and he concurred.[4]

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[2] Press Secretary Hagerty received the President's call at Columbia Country Club. His diary records that conversation and also summarizes a subsequent telephone conversation with Secretary Dulles as follows:

"Dulles called back in about a half hour and explained that it might be necessary in the war of nerves game that we had to play in Geneva for the Communists to realize that if they turned down reasonable French demands the United States through the President would move dramatically through one or two possibilities.

"The first possibility, which Dulles did not like himself, would be to have the President go to the Congress on Wednesday and ask for immediate wartime powers. This would cause anxiety here in the country, would scare everybody to death and would be too drastic. The second was the possibility of a report to the people by the President, in which the President would end up by proposing that the United States would immediately take steps to bring the whole question of Indochina and the peace settlement there into the United Nations itself. Dulles explained that the second step was, of course, more likely than the first but what was more important was that the Communists had gotten the impression that we would not stand for much nonsense and were ready to move rapidly to counteract any stalling that they might pursue.

"Of course, Mendes-France made a major political and diplomatic mistake in setting a deadline of July 20th. The Commies will never let the free world meet such a deadline and Mendes-France should have known that before he made it. Dulles and I agreed to meet Monday morning in the White House to further discuss this situation." (Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers)

[3] For text of the Secretary's cable to Under Secretary Smith, Tosec 568 of July 18, see vol. XVI, p. 1436. Smith reported having informed Mendès-France in telegram Secto 665, July 19; for text, see *ibid.*, p. 1455.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[4] The Secretary's office record of the telephone conversation with Smith is not printed. The record of his subsequent call to the President read as follows:

"The Sec. said Smith feels that a settlement is more likely than he had thought heretofore. He thinks it unwise to make an announcement that if there is no agreement the Pres. will make a speech. That will have a disturbing effect. The Pres. asked what should we tentatively do about timing. The Sec. said his feeling is if it is not announced, we should take an extra day to be sure. The British are taking a pretty good line if there is a breakup. The Pres. will tell Hagerty it is postponed at least 24 hours and possibly longer." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

751G.00/7-1954 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, July 19, 1954—6 p. m.

248. Repeated information Paris 93, niact Geneva 51. Prime Minister Diem sent for me this afternoon to say that his government would not ratify any accord which failed to provide an "enclave" in Tonkin Delta. Later he amended his statement to say that his government would accept an "international administration" of Hanoi–Haiphong area plus bishoprics of Bui Chu and Phat Diem. In later continuation of conversation with acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Duong Don, latter said to me that it was more important to retain Hanoi whether as part of enclave or under international administration than two bishoprics.

In accordance with Department's telegram sent Geneva Tosec 557, Saigon 210,[1] I told Diem that US Government fully recognizes justice of claim of Vietnamese Government to sovereignty over entire national territory and that it regards loss of northern areas, which it cannot accept as final, as dictated by harsh military necessity. I informed him also that in discussions with French and British we had emphasized great importance of maintaining an enclave.

Diem said that if no enclave or internationally supervised area in north were maintained, it would be impossible to build a solid, defensible state in south. It was not a question of losing Tonkin to Viet Minh but of losing it to Communist China whose lackeys Viet Minh were. With China occupying not merely entire north but also northern and valuable part of central Annam, remaining Vietnam could never be in security.

Our conversation was interrupted here by another appointment and Diem asked me to continue conversation with acting Foreign Minister. Latter said that any government signing an armistice which failed to provide an enclave in north could not hope to enjoy popular confidence or survive. In reply to my question, he said that while Diem would not ratify an accord implying complete loss of north, he would not at this time attempt to oppose it by his own forces or attack French orally or otherwise, nor would he bring Vietnamese units in French Union Forces to disobey French commands. Neither, Don thought, would Diem or his government resign. Don went on to say that government was entirely "realistic" and understood necessity of maintaining French Expeditionary Force in Vietnam, whether that force fought Viet Minh or not. Its mere presence there, although not in combat, would prevent military vacuum which China and Viet Minh would immediately attempt to fill. He said government was perfectly aware that Vietnamese army as presently constituted and disciplined could not hope to withstand Viet Minh alone. He knew that at best it would take several months to build that army up into a real fighting force. Object of government was to gain time. Another reason for government's refusal to approve a complete cession of north was, while French and Vietnamese forces would in fact withdraw from that region, Viet Minh would not really withdraw from zones in center and south they now occupy. They might bring out one-fifth or one-tenth of their forces in central and southern zones but bulk of them would be left there with hidden arms, ready to revolt when time was ripe, meanwhile terrorizing population and preventing any effective administration. Vietnamese government was not, he said, anti-French and realized necessity of French aid.

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[1] See footnote 1 to telegram 226, p. 1847.

To that I remarked that Tran Van Chuong, Ambassador-designate to Washington, seemed to hold other views, since in memorandum left with Secretary (Paris telegram sent Department 219, Saigon 16)[2] he had said that withdrawal of French troops from Indochina would present no danger, because Vietnamese Government would have no difficulty in replacing every French unit with a Vietnamese unit. Don said there must be some misunderstanding since that was not government's policy. He suggested that Chuong meant that French troops might be withdrawn when Vietnamese army had completed its instruction and formation.

Neither Diem nor Don seemed inclined discuss Vietnamese Foreign Minister's note to French delegation (Geneva telegram sent Department Secto 633, Saigon 51)[3] beyond stating that although they had no desire to see Vietnam become "a mandated power" under United

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[2] Telegram 219 from Paris, July 16, is not printed. See, however, footnote 8, p. 1840.

[3] The reference telegram, dated July 17, contained an unofficial translation of a note from the Vietnamese Delegation at Geneva to the French Delegation protesting the imminent partition of Vietnam and asking that the entire country be placed provisionally under the control of the United Nations. For text, see vol. XVI, p. 1418.

Nations, that would be preferable to partition at sixteenth or even eighteenth parallel.

Heath

751G.00/7-1954 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

Saigon, July 19, 1954—7 p. m.

249. Repeated information Paris 94, Geneva 52, Hanoi unnumbered. After talking with Prime Minister Diem today, I saw General Ely. Ely's principal preoccupation is lest Vietnamese Government permit manifestations against armistice which would endanger public order or take some action or make some declaration which might lessen discipline and obedience of Vietnamese units serving with French Union Forces. He told me that if anything of that sort occurred he would not hesitate to take firm action, even to point of putting Diem under arrest.

Ely asserted that if armistice which he was instructed to sign was in his view a "capitulation" he would refuse to sign it. He would not sign an armistice establishing demarcation line at 16th parallel, but he might possibly agree to 17th parallel. He was not in any case going automatically to sign any armistice which he had no real hand in negotiating. He was particularly worried over what might happen in several days period which would elapse between signing of agreement and actual cease-fire.

Heath

Editorial Note

Department of State Press Release No. 391 of July 19, 1954, contained the text of a letter from Pierre Mendès-France, the Prime Minister of France, to the Secretary of State expressing appreciation for the recently completed airlift by the United States of 500 French wounded from Indochina to France. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, August 2, 1954, page 165.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Presidential Telephone Conversation, Tuesday, July 20, 1954, 8:50 a. m.

Secy Dulles called to report on cables from Bedell Smith.[1] Russians are pressing for a conference resolution which we will join adopting all these things. We are refusing to do that but are authorizing him to make a declaration on behalf of the U.S. which will take note of the conference decisions. We will not use force to disturb them. If there is renewal of aggression there, we will look upon it as gravity. Will stick to that as decision. We don't know all details just what these basic documents will be. Will apparently be about where we thought it would be—will include Naval Base at Turneau [*Tourane*], & Cambodia. Will allow about 9 months for evacuation of the French troops from the Delta. Will apparently give complete autonomy to Laos & Cambodia. Will provide for elections not later than June '56 (nearly 2 years—will give fairly good time to get ready for them). Supervisory committee will be Poland, India, & Canada. Will be set up with a ruled unanimity. Will put Canada in position where it can block things. Mendes-France is now with Molotov; afterwards will talk to Bedell Smith. Then Bedell plans to call Dulles, who will keep Pres. posted.

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[1] The Secretary of State's office record of this conversation is in the Dulles papers at the Eisenhower Library. For correspondence with Under Secretary Smith at Geneva on July 20, see vol. xvi, pp. 1470 ff.

Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers

Hagerty Diary, Tuesday, July 20, 1954

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

In at 8:15.

Dulles called me in the morning to give me a fill-in for the President on the Geneva Conference.[1] He had just finished talking with Bedell Smith in Geneva and reported that the Russians were pressing us hard to have us join in agreeing to the settlement. Dulles said that we would not agree to do so and would probably issue a unilateral declaration noting the decision of the Conference and saying that under Article II of the United Nations Charter we would abide by it and not use force to upset it. He said that as he was calling me, Mendes-France was still meeting with Molotov in Geneva and that from the information he had received from Bedell, the settlement would obtain the following provisions:

1. French evacuation of the Tonkin Delta in 200 or 250 days.
2. Partition of Viet Nam slightly above the Seventeenth Parallel and above Road #9, which is important for transportation across the country.

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[1] The Secretary of State's office record of a telephone conversation with Hagerty at 9:07 a.m. read as follows: "Telephone call from Mr. Hagerty. The Sec. said it is all right for the Pres. to have his press conference tomorrow. He repeated what he had told the Pres. Things will be decided today. We should work something up for the Pres. press conference." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations") This is presumably the same conversation described here by Hagerty.

3. General elections in June of 1956.
4. A Control Commission composed of Poland, India and Canada.

Dulles said that such a Commission was not particularly advantageous to us but that if the Commission were given veto power, Canada could at least vote against Poland and India, and this would probably be to our advantage in the long run.

He said that he did not expect any final decision to be reached until late tonight, probably after seven o'clock our time, which would be after midnight there (beyond the expiration of Mendes-France's deadline). Dulles said that he thought, however, that he would be able to supply the President with enough information and material for his press conference tomorrow.

I reported this to the President and we agreed to go through with the press conference although we postponed it from 10:30 to 11:30 to provide us with more time to get the material from the State Department.

At seven o'clock in the evening Dulles called me again and said that he had had another talk with Smith at Geneva and that at the present time it looked as if the settlement would be delayed at least two or three hours [2] and that he planned to have the State Department working group at his house at 5:30 tomorrow morning in order to get to us in time a statement for use by the President at his press conference.

Dulles reported that the principal documents on the settlement which had been given to Bedell Smith ["] looked as if we could take note of them as I outlined to you this morning." He reported, however, that in the principal settlement documents there were many cross references to military agreements and that the translation of these military agreements had just started and he would not be in a position to know all they contained until much later. He said also that the plenary session would not be held until tomorrow and would probably start at about the time the President would be in the press conference. He thought, however, that he would be able to give the President his judgment on these matters by 10:30 tomorrow morning.

The President was out on the putting green with David and I reported this conversation to him. He said that everything seemed to be going reasonably well and that he would hold his press conference at 11:30.[3]

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[2] Regarding the telephone conversations between Secretary Dulles and Under Secretary Smith which occurred at 6:20 p. m. and 6:43 p. m. Washington time, see editorial note, vol. XVI, p. 1478. The Secretary's office record of his conversation with Hagerty at 6:54 p. m. (erroneously dated July 21) is in the Dulles papers at the Eisenhower Library.

[3] Regarding the Geneva Agreement concluded on the night of July 20–21, see editorial note, p. 1859. For the President's press conference statement of July 21, see editorial note, p. 1864.

751H.00/7–2054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Phnom Penh (Goodman) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT PHNOM PENH, July 20, 1954—8 p. m.

21. Sent Saigon 29, Department 21, Bangkok 8, Geneva 18. Emergency Cabinet meeting this morning prepared reply to urgent telegram from Cambodian delegation Geneva requesting instructions as to answers to approaches from French, Soviet and Chinese delegations—and to two ideas presented by three Western Powers. Delegation said it needed answer by July 20. Government most concerned about implications these approaches, and when Acting Foreign Minister Poc Thoun said I had requested appointment which he had granted for afternoon, Cabinet almost had him see me immediately in hope I had more information for them. Answering telegram approved by King, was sent at noon, and I saw both telegrams shortly after, Poc Thoun having been instructed to show them to me.

Delegation said that French asked whether Cambodia would accept (1) cease-fire without guarantees, (2) amnesty "all Cambodians" without government reprisals against them, and free elections as soon as peace and security restored, (3) banning of external military aid during duration Vietnam truce. Soviets said they would insist on (1) no foreign military bases on Cambodian soil, and (2) no military alliances with any country. Chinese said Cambodians must not accept American instructors for armed forces.

Delegation added that US, British and French delegations had suggested that Cambodia accept cease-fire without guarantees, with verbal understanding that three Western Powers would provide adequate guarantees for this nation's security outside Geneva framework. Delegation added that this meant within structure of some Southeast Asia Defense Organization. Delegation also asked what should be its position if a general truce were proposed tomorrow.

Government answer was no to all French, Soviet and Chinese proposals except amnesty Cambodian rebels and elections, saying its policy always had been to grant such amnesty and to hold elections as soon as peace restored and security conditions justified move. However, Cambodia cannot accept limitations its sovereignty involved in other proposals, and could not limit forces until they were at level necessary to protect nation of five million people. Cease-fire without removal of Viet Minh forces in country would "legalize" invaders position in Cambodia, and sovereign nation must reserve right to enter alliances including those establishing friendly bases on its soil (King added thought that there are in fact no foreign bases in Cambodia) and must also reserve right to employ advisers regardless of nationality.

Concerning Western counsel to accept cease-fire and rely on promise of free-world guarantees within some other framework, government reiterated Son Sann's Geneva statement of July 13 as to conditions under which Cambodia would accept "neutralization", and said it hoped urgently that a Southeast Asia organization would protect Cambodia either through the latter's membership in it, or in a neutral status which such an organization would guarantee. Government also gave delegation freedom of action (within policy framework already laid down) in committing Cambodia to truce formula which might be forthcoming at conference, saying it could not make decision itself without seeing proposal.

Poc Thoun said government deeply depressed at this turn of events, but had expected nothing better from Geneva. If Western Great Powers supported a formula to end war which made Cambodia defenseless, this country could not prevent the situation. It would not, however, acquiesce in its own destruction by agreeing to absurd conditions, not in slightest relevant to nation's actual problem, which gave up to Communists independence won from French.

According to Poc Thoun, Son Sann, returned this morning from Geneva, expressed his opinion at meeting that severity of Communist demands resulted largely from Cravel [*craven?*] desire of French to achieve peace at any price, which he said had resulted in degree Viet Minh arrogance which had to be seen to be believed.

Although this development has caused it to waver somewhat, Cambodians still exhibit confidence in US ability and willingness to help them in this terrible situation. They want to be strong and forceful in face of Communist aggression, but understand painfully their dependence on large-scale outside assistance. For long they have expected no real strength from French and therefore are not surprised at that country's miserable performance, but they still hope we will provide power necessary to balance and stop Communists outside Cambodia's borders.[1] Government hoped today I would provide clarification and reassurance, which, of course, I could not do, not having slightest inkling as to course our policy taking. We have not had communication here from Department or Geneva for some ten days, and I would appreciate information and guidance.

GOODMAN

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[1] In telegram 26 from Phnom Penh, July 22, Goodman reported that Prime Minister Penn Nouth had reiterated Cambodia's desire for direct military assistance from the United States. (751H.5/7-2254)

Editorial Note

During the night of July 20-21, 1954, separate bilateral cease-fire agreements for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were concluded at the

Geneva Conference. An unsigned Final Declaration was issued by the Conference on July 21. In addition, unilateral declarations were made by the Delegations of Cambodia, Laos, and France with respect to provisions of the settlement. The agreements for cessation of hostilities, the Final Declaration, and the unilateral declarations constituted the Agreements of the Geneva Conference. For texts, see volume XVI, pages 1505 ff.

At the Eighth and final Plenary Session on Indochina, July 21, Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith made the following declaration on behalf of the United States:

"The Government of the United States being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations takes note of the agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21, 1954 between (*a*) the Franco-Laotian Command and the Command of the People's Army of Vietnam; (*b*) the Royal Khmer Army Command and the Command of the People's Army of Vietnam; (*c*) Franco-Vietnamese Command and the Command of the People's Army of Vietnam and of paragraphs 1 to 12 inclusive of the declaration presented to the Geneva Conference on July 21, 1954, declares with regard to the aforesaid agreements and paragraphs that (i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force; and (ii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

"In connection with the statement in the declaration concerning free elections in Vietnam my Government wishes to make clear its position which it has expressed in a declaration made in Washington on June 29, 1954, as follows:

> 'In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly.'

"With respect to the statement made by the representative of the State of Vietnam, the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position.

"We share the hope that the agreements will permit Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations, and will enable the peoples of that area to determine their own future." (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 277)

The June 29, 1954, declaration quoted above was issued by President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Churchill at the conclusion of their conversations at Washington; see editorial note, page 1751. The statement by Tran Van Do, representative of the State of Vietnam, mentioned in the United States declaration, was also delivered at the Eighth Plenary Session on Indochina. The Vietnamese statement protested the agreement to partition the country.

For additional documentation concerning the declaration by the United States and the conclusion of the Geneva Conference, see volume XVI, pages 1497 ff.

751G.00/7–2154 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, July 21, 1954—9 p. m.

305. Repeated information Paris 114, Hanoi 90. In South Vietnam Geneva agreements,[1] anticipated with pessimism since inauguration Mendes-France, have not evoked as yet violent or marked reaction. With exception of always vocal intellectuals, reaction is chiefly one of unhappy disapproval tempered by relief that fighting ended. The demonstrations which have taken place in Saigon and elsewhere throughout Annam and South Vietnam have been well-organized but without fervor. Protests against participation in Geneva accords have seemed more for the record than as reaction public opinion. Extent of tragedy to country perhaps not yet fully realized.

As example, French officers training Vietnamese troops, which almost wholly Cochin-Chinese, report little or no emotional reaction to news from Geneva. Similar lack of reaction noted by members of various American missions in Saigon. USOM Saigon representative returning from Hue reports reaction there largely one of intense relief that line established to the north.

The announcement by Prime Minister Diem and Chief of Staff Vietnamese Army Hinh, although deploring partition, counsel calm and preparation of free Vietnam reunite country. Former, in appeal to Vietnamese people, states "in spite of our pain, in spite of our revulsion, we must remain calm and united to hold out our arms to our refugee brothers . . . while preparing ourselves without delay for the peaceful and difficult struggle which must finally liberate our country from all foreign direction, no matter what it may be, and from all opposition". Flags on all Vietnamese official buildings half-masted July 22.

Hinh has informed General O'Daniel he would abide by agreements reached. His public announcement reflects that decision.

Many intellectuals continue their same line of argument that unless French honestly willing give up control and leave country to Vietnamese there will be no possibility prevent Communists from taking over control country through elections or force. Many argue that with departure of French, non-Communist Viet Minh leaders would not hesitate to join Diem government.

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[1] See editorial note, *supra*.

Meanwhile, although Saigon thus far completely calm, French officials remain apprehensive, demonstrations being carefully controlled and evening curfew being imposed on all French military personnel. French military being advised not to appear in public singly and to avoid crowded places.

Reaction of skepticism regarding appeal of "free" Vietnam to Tonkinese reflected in apprehension expressed by Pham Huu Chuong, Minister Health and Social Action, who informed Acting Director USOM, Saigon, that he beginning to fear that large number of anticipated refugees (some 700,000 according to Minister's calculations) will not evacuate in belief they might be leaving north to migrate to area which would not offer greater opportunity and which ultimately destined to fall to Viet Minh control.

We anticipate situation will steadily rankle in Vietnamese opinion and progressively embitter attitude towards French unless latter accomplish a remarkable diplomatic effort and effective aid program.

HEATH

751G.00/7–2154 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET HANOI, July 21, 1954—6 p. m.

77. Repeated information Saigon 97, Paris 27. Hoang-Co-Binh and Tran-Van-Dung came to Consulate this afternoon to return my call. Dung and General Van are leaving for Saigon tonight to obtain from Prime Minister Diem instructions in light cease-fire agreements.

Although they did not know terms of agreement, both Binh and Dung were in better spirits than I have ever seen them. They seemed particularly pleased over press reports from Geneva that France and Viet Minh would be only signatories. They took this to mean that Vietnamese Government would not recognize agreement and that US would furnish assistance, arms, etc. directly to their government. They also seemed to accept report that French would have ten months leave Tonkin and implied that with US assistance this would give them time to prepare effective resistance againt Viet Minh. Existing Vietnamese units would form basis for this resistance effort which, according them, could be started at once since French operational control over Vietnamese units would end when cease-fire became effective.

I confined my comments to a repetition of statement that we, like everyone else, were waiting to hear what terms of cease-fire agreement were.

CAMERON

751G.00/7–2154 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, July 21, 1954—6 p. m.

274. Repeated information Paris 100, Geneva 57, Bangkok unnumbered. General Ely sent for me shortly after noon today. He had just received the last of a series of telegrams giving him the main details of the cease-fire agreement. He said that they are far from ideal but he had feared they would be much worse. He was willing to sign a cease-fire agreement on these terms.

He was particularly delighted at the extension of the time for the evacuation of Haiphong to 300 days. He said, significantly, and repeated the statement "in that time perhaps the whole situation can change".

Comment: Almost on every occasion I have talked with Ely he has told me he would prefer to carry on the war to victory with American and other international participation along the lines he had discussed in Washington.

Prior to receiving all these telegrams he had gone to see Ngo Dinh Diem but had been unable to obtain from the latter any assurances that he would refrain from opposing the armistice or that he would not resign. All that Diem would say was that he had a "problem of conscience" which he had not resolved. Ely assured Diem that he would give him all possible support but whatever came he must maintain order and discipline. Ely said he was somewhat relieved by a telegram from La Chambre saying that the head of the Vietnamese delegation, while protesting the agreement, had assured them he would not oppose its being carried into effect. Ely was also informed that Bao Dai had telegraphed Diem to remain on the job.

Ely urged me to see Ngo Dinh Diem and urge upon him to remain in office and issue orders to his troops to accept the decisions and orders of the French High Command. I told him that my position was somewhat difficult since Diem had not sent for me nor had I received as yet instructions from my government.

Ely said that he had not seen the full terms of the armistice and did not know whether they might prevent the reception of American matériel or even the continuation of MAAG. He said that if such stipulations were made in the armistice they must be "gotten around" (tournée). There ought to be some sort of base for the reception and storage of material in the vicinity, perhaps "between Tonkin and Singapore".

He said that obviously if remaining Vietnam were to be saved from communism the United States and France must work together to provide economic and military aid.

Ely said he was already withdrawing some troops, including a regimental combat team, from the northern delta to be stationed in central Vietnam where military forces were too weak compared with the Viet Minh. He did not contemplate any return of forces to France. He had asked Paris for the prompt assignment of a certain general officer to work out plans for the placing of French forces withdrawn from the north, some to be stationed in Saigon, others at Tourane, Haiphong and a base constructed, he thought, at Cam Ranh Bay.

Returning to the subject of Ngo Dinh Diem, he thought the latter might be the man to head a government of military and political reconstruction in Vietnam but he would have to surround himself with a larger and more representative cabinet. Diem possessed one quality, rare in Indochina, that of being absolutely honest. On the other hand he was not, in Ely's opinion, over intelligent.

HEATH

Editorial Note

At his news conference of 11:30 a. m., July 21, 1954, President Eisenhower read the following statement:

"I am glad, of course, that agreement has been reached at Geneva to stop the bloodshed in Indochina. The United States has not been a belligerent in the war in which thousands of brave men, while defending freedom, have died during the past 7 years.

"The primary responsibility for the settlement in Indochina rested with those nations which participated in the fighting.

"Our role at Geneva has been at all times to try to be helpful where desired, and to aid France and Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam, to obtain a just and honorable settlement which will take into account the needs of the interested people.

"Accordingly, the United States has not itself been a party to or bound by the decisions taken by the conference, but it is our hope that it will lead to the establishment of peace consistent with the rights and needs of the countries concerned. The agreement contains features which we do not like, but a great deal depends on how they work in practice.

"The United States is issuing at Geneva a statement to the effect that it is not prepared to join in the conference declaration but, as loyal members of the United Nations, we also say that in compliance with the obligations and principles contained in article II of the United Nations Charter, the United States will not use force to disturb the settlement. We also say that any renewal of Communist aggression would be viewed by us as a matter of grave concern.

"As evidence of our resolve to assist Cambodia and Laos to play their parts in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of free nations, we are requesting the agreement of the governments of Cambodia and Laos to our appointment of an ambassador or minister to be resident at their respective capitals. We already have a Chief of Mission at Saigon, the capital of Viet-Nam, and this embassy will, of course, be maintained.

"The United States is actively pursuing discussions with other free nations with a view to the rapid organization of a collective defense in southeast Asia in order to prevent further direct or indirect Communist aggression in that general area." (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, page 642)

This statement was prepared in the Department of State. Aspects of the statement were considered by Secretary Dulles and Presidential Press Secretary Hagerty during telephone conversations of 9:15 and 10:20 a. m. on July 21. In the course of the second exchange, Dulles had his secretary dictate the text of the proposed statement. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations"; Eisenhower Library, James C. Hagerty papers) The President and Secretary Dulles discussed the State Department draft by telephone at 11 a. m. Certain changes in wording were agreed to accommodate the views of the President. The President's office record of that conversation is in the Eisenhower papers, Whitman file at the Eisenhower Library.

751G.00/7-2154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY WASHINGTON, July 21, 1954—1:34 p. m.

253. For Ambassador from Secretary. If you think appropriate please orally say to Mendes-France that while many aspects of the Indochina settlement obviously reflect a sense of compulsion rather than of choice, I feel that it is at least a good augury for France that he has demonstrated a capacity to take decisions and carry them out. You may tell him that I hope he feels that our presence through General Smith at the Geneva Conference was helpful to his cause, and that so far as I am concerned, I greatly value the opportunity we had at Paris for an exchange of views, and believe that exchange will be helpful for the future.[2]

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State.

[2] Telegram 364 from Paris, July 27, contained the following reply by Ambassador Dillon: "In accordance with reftel I told Mendès yesterday how much you valued the exchange of views you had with him in Paris, and how impressed you were with the fact that he was showing the capacity to take decisions and carry them out. Mendès seemed very pleased and said that he had found the Paris talks of the greatest personal value to him. He also said that he felt the return of Bedell Smith to Geneva had been an event of the greatest importance and that he thought it was probably impossible for us to realize how important Bedell Smith's presence had been to achieving a successful result at Geneva." (751G.00/7-2754)

751G.00/7-2154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

CONFIDENTIAL WASHINGTON, July 21, 1954—6:05 p. m.

261. Defense today ordering suspension all MDAP shipments Indochina and diversion any shipments en route. Copy instruction sent MAAG Paris and Saigon for info. Question future shipments being considered by OCB.

Believe US relations with France and Associated States will be advanced if in addition learning this news through other channels those Governments are also informed by Embassy of this action. You should indicate action in line with armistice and will provide breathing space during which evacuation of arms and supplies from Delta can be undertaken and we can evaluate situation and develop future policy.[2]

Defense action made public.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Beigel of WE. Also sent to Saigon as telegram 257, to Phnom Penh as telegram 7, and to Vientiane as telegram 4.

[2] In telegram 326 from Paris, July 24, Ambassador Dillon reported that the Embassy had informed the Foreign Ministry that all MDAP shipments to Indochina had been suspended. (751G.00/7-2454)

POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, JULY–DECEMBER 1954: THE INCREASED ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN SOUTH VIETNAM; MEASURES TAKEN IN SUPPORT OF THE DIEM GOVERNMENT; THE BEGINNINGS OF AMERICAN AID PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 207th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, July 22, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Present at the 207th meeting of the Council were the President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (Item 2); the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

1. *Possible Use of ROK Forces in Indochina*[2] (NSC Actions Nos. 1054–*b* and 1147–*b*)

The National Security Council:

Adopted the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, concurred in by the Secretary of Defense, that the present U.S. policy with respect to the possible use of ROK forces in Indochina (NSC Action No. 1054–*b*) not be changed at this time, but be kept under review in the light of future developments.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on July 28.

[2] The decision recorded in this paragraph constituted NSC Action No. 1178, July 22, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions") For NSC Action No. 1054, see extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 187th Meeting of the Council, Mar. 4, p. 1093. For NSC Action No. 1147, see extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 200th Meeting of the NSC, June 3, p. 1660.

Note: The above action, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of Defense.

. . . .

3. *Disposition of Matériel Being Diverted From Indochina* [3]

The National Security Council:

Noted the following statement on the subject by the Secretary of Defense as read at the meeting:

1. The Army, Navy and Air Force have issued necessary instructions to stop movement of matériel into Indochina. Matériel which has departed the ports will be diverted or returned to port generally as follows:

a. The bulk of the matériel will be returned to the Z. I.

b. A great proportion of the ammunition that is presently enroute will be diverted to Formosa.

c. Certain small shipments which are part of a cargo on commercial vessels will be diverted to other countries where requirements for that equipment exist. Examples of this are Thailand, Formosa and a small part will go to AFFE.

2. The final disposition of the diverted equipment will be to expedite the build-up of MDAP matériel in other countries in the Far East South Pacific area such as Formosa, Thailand, Japan and the Philippines within existing programs.

. . . .

5. *Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security*

. . . .

Mr. [Allen] Dulles then commented on the Geneva settlement, using a map of Indochina. He pointed out that the great problem which would be faced by Vietnam would be how to maintain order in the south, where, to put it mildly, the French were extremely unpopular as a result of the partition. As evidence of this, Mr. Dulles said that the Vietnamese Foreign Minister had resigned, and that there were unconfirmed rumors that the Vietnamese Prime Minister would also resign. It was to be hoped that the French would not replace these officials with obedient puppets. If they did, the tragedy which had resulted in the loss of northern Vietnam would soon be repeated in the south.

Admiral Radford inquired whether the armistice agreement did not provide for the withdrawal of French forces from South Vietnam as soon as the Vietnam Government so requested. Mr. Dulles replied that while this was so, who would make the request for French withdrawal? Certainly not Bao Dai, since he was completely under French control.

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[3] This item constituted NSC Action No. 1180, July 22, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

Admiral Radford went on to express the view that the United States could not continue to send military matériel to the free states of Indochina, and he also inferred that we would be obliged to withdraw our Military Advisory and Assistance Group [*Military Assistance Advisory Group*] (MAAG). Curiously, however, he had received an inquiry from General Ely respecting U.S. plans to continue the training of the native armed forces. Ely had suggested that somehow or other it would be necessary to "get around" the armistice prohibitions. Mr. Dulles replied that it was quite clear that the United States could not have MAAGs in either Laos or Cambodia, according to the armistice provisions. This was not clear in the case of Vietnam.

. . . .

9. *The Geneva Conference*

Secretary Dulles said that he had very little to add to what was now general knowledge about the Geneva settlement. The Communist demands had turned out to be relatively moderate in terms of their actual capabilities. This relative moderation could perhaps be explained as resulting from one of two causes or a combination of both. The first was the Communist conviction that they will secure what they really want gradually in the course of time. Second was the Communist fear that if they demanded too much the adverse reaction in the free world, and particularly in the United States, would increase the danger of general war, which they do not want now.

As the Council knew, continued Secretary Dulles, the United States had taken the position at Geneva that it would neither endorse nor be a party to the actual settlement. We had continued to resist pressures to be a party to the settlement, and had issued our own independent unilateral declaration.

The great problem from now on out was whether we could salvage what the Communists had ostensibly left out of their grasp in Indochina. Secretary Dulles indicated, in this respect, that the State Department had been actively carrying on negotiations with the British, who seemed now willing to go ahead to make plans for the defense of the rest of Southeast Asia despite India. Present schedules call for getting going formally on discussions of the defense grouping for Southeast Asia by the end of August. Secretary Dulles thought that the real danger to be anticipated came not primarily from overt Communist military aggression but from subversion and disintegration. In view of this, he said that he would almost rather see the French get completely out of the rest of Indochina and thus permit the United States to work directly with the native leadership in these states. In answer to a question from Mr. Cutler as to whether or not the French would get out, Secretary Dulles said it was hard to reply. He thought that if the French believed they could secure real control in South Vietnam and elsewhere, many of them would be anxious to stay on. However, Mendes-France at least took a more realistic view of colonialism and, besides this, was most anxious to cut French commitments in the area.

Secretary Dulles then spoke briefly of a possibly serious situation with respect to Congress. Not long ago, when it looked as though the French would cease their military effort in Indochina, the Congressional leaders had informally agreed that the unexpended balance of U.S. aid to assist the French war effort would not be withdrawn but could be used on a flexible basis to assist the remaining free areas of Indochina. This agreement for a flexible handling of this money was now threatened by the results of Geneva, and the members of Congress were anxious to forget their earlier agreement. Of course, continued Secretary Dulles, it was not possible to say at this moment precisely how much money should be spent in any one of the free countries of Southeast Asia, but all of them in general must be built up if the dike against Communism is to be held. Accordingly, Secretary Dulles appealed to all the members of the Council to stand fast on this position. The President in turn called on all those present to support the views expressed by Secretary Dulles on these funds, and indicated that those who could not support the Secretary of State should stay away from Capitol Hill.

Governor Stassen expressed the opinion that if we all stood together we could carry Congress along with the necessity for using the unexpended balance of the aid to Indochina in other states of the area.[4]

Mr. Cutler inquired of Secretary Dulles as to the possibility of getting any considerable number of free Asian states, especially the Colombo powers, into the Southeast Asian regional group, so that it would not appear to be just another white man's group. Secretary Dulles pointed out the two different aspects of the future regional grouping—a smaller one, primarily military in character and with relatively few Asian members at first, around which could perhaps be created a larger grouping of Asian states primarily for purposes of economic stability and growth.

The President expressed his strong support of this general concept.

The National Security Council:[5]

a. Noted and discussed an oral briefing by the Secretary of State on the outcome of the Geneva Conference, and possible developments which might follow in the immediate future.

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[4] For additional documentation on Congressional action regarding aid funds for Southeast Asia in light of the Geneva accords, see volume XII.

[5] Points *a* and *b* constituted NSC Action No. 1186, July 22, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

b. Agreed that the NSC Planning Board should review U.S. policies in the Far East in the light of the situation following the Geneva Conference.

751G.00/7-2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PARIS, July 22, 1954—2 p. m.

292. Repeated information Geneva 43, Saigon 21, London 68. Initial reaction of relief and satisfaction with Geneva settlement now being replaced by more sober realization of concessions which settlement entails. On Tuesday,[1] when news broke feeling was that Mendes had pulled off major coup; now it is rather that he has done best job under circumstances and that circumstances were highly unfavorable.

No longer anticipated that today's Assembly debate will be restricted to formal approval Mendes' actions.[2] Deputies had opportunity yesterday study and digest terms settlement and there are already rumblings on magnitude of concessions made (loss of Hanoi and Haiphong, sacrifice of 10,000,000 citizens of the French Union to Communism, effect on balance of Union, etc.) and reflection that someone, not Mendes, must be responsible for not having got better settlement earlier.

Many parliamentarians have made public statements ranging from references to "Munich" to sweeping eulogies of Mendes. Marc Jacquet, former Minister for Associated States, and some MRPs are quoted as saying that better terms would have been arrived at earlier under Bidault.

In keeping with tradition, only one interpellation (Valabregue, Radical, friendly to Mendes) has been filed for today's debate but many speakers will comment on it. They include Bidault, whose intervention is most anxiously awaited. If he is highly critical of government, debate may lead to "opening of dossiers" but in our opinion Bidault is too astute a politician to attempt buck government at this moment when Mendes' prestige is so high.

Although Communists will probably vote with government, anticipated they will do so quietly for speaker they have inscribed, Waldeck-

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[1] July 20.

[2] The Geneva Conference settlement was debated in the National Assembly on July 22 and July 23. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Assembly approved a resolution expressing satisfaction with the cessation of hostilities in Indochina and supporting government policy. The vote was 471 to 14. For the record of these proceedings, including statements by Premier Mendès-France supporting the accords, an attack on the settlement by former Foreign Minister Bidault, and the text of the resolution adopted, see France, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 1954, Débats*, pp. 3533–3547 and 3573–3589. The Embassy in France commented at length on the debate in despatch 282 of Aug. 2. (751G.00/8–254)

Rochet is second string. Today's non-Communist press severely criticizes party for being only group in Paris to celebrate settlement, in form banners hung from party headquarters commending "popular victory of cease-fire".

DILLON

751G.00/7–2354 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 23, 1954—9 p. m.

304. Repeated information Paris 113, Geneva 68, Hanoi 89. I asked to see Ngo Dinh Diem this morning. He told me that he had not seen text of armistice nor was he informed of Under Secretary's statement made at final meeting of Geneva Conference.[1] I gave him résumé of latter.

Diem said to me that problems confronting his government were almost superhuman but he was disposed to tackle them with will and faith. He was not planning to resign.

Greatest obstacle was growing popular belief that US as a result of arrangements with other Western Powers, to gain ratification of EDC or for some other reason of policy, had abandoned Vietnam and Indochina. He asked me if indeed that was not the fact. I assured him emphatically that our economic aid was still continuing. I reminded him that we had received no request or plan from his government for assistance in meeting new problems confronting him.

He thereupon said that if his government were to be able to combat defeatist drift toward Viet Minh, he would need a definite public assurance of American aid and support. It is by no means a question merely of economic aid. He would need expert assistance that simply could not be found in Vietnam and probably could not be provided by France. Accepting armistice as a traffic [*tragic?*] *fait accompli* he must endeavor to transfer Catholic and other anti-Communist elements from north to free zone of Vietnam.

If he could have public assurance of American aid and support, he believed it would be possible that 1 million, perhaps even 2 million, northerners would take refuge in south. (*Comment:* General Ely believes no more than 200,000 refugees will voluntarily leave Tonkin Delta. He admits faint possibility that through dramatic propaganda Diem might persuade 1 million or more to go south where, in plateau region, space could be found for them. Ely added that if Diem did succeed in such a project of migration he would win eventual national elections.) I reminded Diem that French had promised to arrange for transportation of refugees at their cost to new homes.

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[1] See editorial note, p. 1859.

Diem went on to say neither his own people nor, he feared, the French could handle refugee problem of such magnitude, but US with its experience in human relief and its organizing ability could.

Diem heard with disappointment my statement that we were arresting MDAP shipments, except replacements, at this time in accordance with armistice (Deptel 261 to Paris, Saigon 257).[2] He was somewhat relieved by my further statement this action would provide breathing space to undertake evacuation of supplies and arms from Delta and give us time to evaluate situation and develop future policy. I told him further that in opinion of General O'Daniel there were enough arms and equipment already in Vietnam for maintenance and training of his army.

Ngo Dinh Diem expressed earnest hope that our budgetary support of Vietnam defense effort could continue unreduced and asked that instead of being funneled through French, it be provided directly to his government. I told him I was not in position to inform him on that score at present.

Comment: Until I have had more observation of his performance, I cannot be certain that Ngo Dinh Diem will succeed in leading a national movement of military and political reconstruction against tremendous obstacles that face him, among which are war lord "confessional" groups of Cao Daists, Hoa Haos and Binh Xuyen, not to mention southern separatists. He has shown courage in not submitting to three sects named above and political prudence in not antagonizing them. He has shown good sense, I think, in not dismissing General Hinh, Chief of Staff of Vietnamese National Army, although he knows latter is not loyal to him, until he can find a competent successor and nucleus of loyal officers. He has national reputation for sincerity, nationalism and honesty. There is no other man known to us or to best French observers to replace, with any chance of success at this moment, Diem as head of government.

I recommend that President promptly telegraph and make public a personal message along following lines:

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

"As I said in my press conference on July 21,[3] I think that when the freedom of a man in Vietnam or in China is taken away from him, our own freedom has lost a little. I do not believe that we can continue to exist in the world geographically isolated, and that if we can find a concerted, positive plan for keeping the free nations bound together, none of them will give up.

"As the Under Secretary of State said at Geneva, the United States Government was not prepared to join in the declaration of the Geneva Conference although it took note of the agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21 between the France–Vietnamese command

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[2] Dated July 21, p. 1866.

[3] See editorial note, p. 1864.

and the command of the People's Army of Vietnam, as well as paragraphs 1 to 12, inclusive, of the declaration presented to the Geneva Conference on July 21.

"I should like to underscore what the United States representative at Geneva said when he stated that, with respect to Vietnam, the United States reiterates its traditional position that people are entitled to determine their own future and that the United States will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this.

"As you know, Mr. Prime Minister, the United States for some years has supplied both economic, military and financial assistance to France and Vietnam for the purpose of assisting Vietnam in the war in Indochina. I shall be pleased to recommend to the Congress that, insofar as possible, economic and other assistance be continued for the state of Vietnam until this country is once more united in terms of democratic equity and freedom.

"With my best wishes for the success of your courageous efforts for the welfare of your country."[4]

HEATH

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[4] In telegram 323 to Saigon, July 26, the Department of State informed the Embassy that the draft statement was under consideration. In the meantime, Ambassador Heath was advised to supply Diem with a copy of the armistice agreement and a copy of the statement regarding the Geneva settlement issued by Secretary Dulles on July 23. (751G.00/7-2354) The Secretary's news conference statement of July 23 regarding the Geneva Accords affirmed the dedication of the United States to the principle of self-determination of peoples and to the prevention of the further spread of Communism in Southeast Asia. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, Aug. 2, 1954, pp. 163–164.

751G.00/7-2354

Memorandum of Conversation, by Paul J. Sturm of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] July 23, 1954.

Subject: International Control Commission for Indochina[1]

Participants: Mr. Heeney, Ambassador of Canada, Washington
Mr. James J. McCardle, Second Secretary, Canadian Embassy
The Deputy Under Secretary
Mr. Paul J. Sturm, PSA

Ambassador Heeney said that the Canadian Government first learned of its invitation to join the International Control Commission on Indochina from the newpapers. The formal invitation from the Conference Chairman was received yesterday after the Cabinet meeting. The position now is that the Canadian Government is deliberating and its formal disposition is to accept the invitation as a duty but without enthusiasm. The Government foresees difficulties of all sorts, political and physical. It will be obliged to deploy manpower from its small pool in an area where it has neither interest nor experts.

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[1] Regarding the organization and functions of the International Control Commission in Vietnam during 1954, see British Cmd. 9461, Vietnam No. 1 (1955): *First and Second Interim Reports of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam.*

All these considerations are giving the Canadians pause and the Government wishes assurance that it is acting in a cause in which it is interested and with the general approbation of the United States. Mr. Murphy said that we were delighted that the Canadians have been invited to be members of the Commission but the U.S. would never have wished such a burden on the Canadian Government. Ambassador Heeney said that his government had hoped that the U.S. would feel it advantageous that the Canadians were participating and that he would communicate Mr. Murphy's affirmative reply to the Minister of External Affairs.

Ambassador Heeney went on to say that the Government's final decision would be made on either July 24 or July 26. The article by Raymond Daniell on page 1 of today's *New York Times* is very accurate except that it exaggerates Canada's hesitancy to take part in the International Commission. . . . Mr. Murphy replied that the U.S. has confidence in the Canadian Ambassador and his government and believes that such a private arrangement would work out to mutual advantage. Ambassador Heeney said that Canada expects to receive criticism all around on the score of its performance in Indochina.

Mr. Murphy said that the Commission would have the advantage of India's experience in supervising the Korean armistice. Ambassador Heeney said that he wondered if any of the Indians who had served in Korea would be assigned to the Commission. He added that he expects India will accept the invitation.

Ambassador Heeney said that he fully understood the great difficulty of the U.S. position with regard to the Indochina armistice and that he wished to express his appreciation of the Secretary's skill in handling the problem and of the Under Secretary's performance at Geneva, both of which have been helpful to the general settlement. The Ambassador asked Mr. Murphy if he could clarify the U.S. relation to the operation of the Geneva agreements. He has noted that the Commission is responsible to the Conference members. Would the U.S. consider itself as retaining an interest in this respect owing to its having been present at Geneva? Mr. Murphy replied that it was not possible to make an answer yet to this question. We are looking into all aspects of the problem but our position has not yet been established.

The Ambassador went on to say that the Canadian Government would be glad to have the ideas of the U.S. government on how the Commission might most usefully operate since the U.S. has had much relevant experience. Mr. Murphy replied that this is a very important question and that we will have it in mind. He added that it will be interesting to see how the voting procedure stipulated by the agreements will work out in practice.

The Ambassador asked for certain material information on Indochina and was told that PSA would be glad to make available post reports and like information. The Ambassador said that he would call upon the Secretary as soon as the Canadian Government's decision had been made and that he would like to hear the Under Secretary's impressions while they are still fresh. The Ambassador said that he had no idea who was responsible for naming Canada to the Commission and suggested that it might have been Krishna Menon.

In conclusion, Ambassador Heeney asked Mr. Murphy, quite off the record, if Canada "could get away with refusing membership on the Commission." Mr. Murphy replied that since Canada had not been consulted it could certainly "get away" with refusing but whether it would be in the free world's interest for it to do so was another question. Ambassador Heeney left Mr. Murphy with the impression that Canada would accept membership but with great reluctance and at considerable sacrifice.

Ambassador Heeney was given copies of the three cease-fire agreements.[2]

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[2] Reference is to the cease-fire agreements on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; for texts, see vol. XVI, pp. 1505, 1521, and 1531.

751G.5 MSP/7–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 24, 1954—2 p. m.

307. Repeated information Paris 115, Hanoi unnumbered. Last night General Hinh asked McClintock to see him. He said that morning he had received permission from Prime Minister Diem to establish informal contact with some member of this Embassy with a view to discussing prospects for securing direct US aid both in military equipment and assistance, as well as straight economic aid. Hinh asked what US attitude would be on this question in light of cease-fire agreements and new relationships between Vietnam and France.

McClintock replied that while he personally had long favored direct aid to all three Indochinese states, question was difficult one and we were too close to signature of cease-fire agreements to be able to render off-the-cuff opinions. If, as Under Secretary had once suggested to Bao Dai (cf. Secto 652 repeated information Paris 93, Saigon 62

July 18),[1] Vietnam established an autonomous army, it might be logical step to supply that army directly rather than through French channel. However, on the other hand, there was problem of limitations imposed by armistice agreement on Vietnam and it might be necessary to resort to oblique approach.

Hinh said that yesterday morning General Ely had proposed that Hinh take command of all Vietnamese forces in south. Hinh said he had rejected this suggestion saying that, since he had been Commander-in-Chief of all Vietnamese Armed Forces, he did not wish now to accept command of approximately half of these forces. Instead he proposed that all Vietnamese troops, whether now serving in French Union Forces or National Army, be consolidated in one force under Vietnamese command. He proposed to weed out unreliable elements, including number of recent conscripts, and after this purification to build up an army of moderate size but of well-tried veterans.

Hinh had expansive ideas on building up Vietnamese Air Force and talked grandly of jets. McClintock pointed out that under armistice agreement it would be almost impossible to think of bringing jet aircraft into this theatre in replacement of present piston-driven aircraft and added word of advice that if Hinh could buckle down and make real army of foot soldiers, perhaps his requirement for air defense would never materialize.

HEATH

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[1] For text of telegram Secto 652 from Geneva, July 18, reporting on a conversation between Under Secretary Smith and Vietnamese officials, see vol. XVI, p. 1426.

751G.00/7-2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 24, 1954—2 p. m.

308. Repeated information Paris 116, Geneva 69. Reference Paris telegram sent Department 303 repeated Saigon 22, Geneva 44.[1] I find view expressed by Chevallier and others in Paris that it was necessary to achieve Geneva settlement in order to preserve French Expeditionary Corps in north from destruction contrary to facts and undignified glossing-over of France's decision to drop Indochina war. Ely has repeatedly said to me that, having drawn in his lines to form Hanoi–Haiphong rectangle, he was convinced he could hold

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[1] Telegram 303 from Paris, July 22, read as follows: "We are informed by Chevallier (Independent), Secretary of State for War, that military situation of French Union Forces in Indochina prior Geneva settlement was considerably worse than generally admitted. He states if settlement had not been reached at Geneva and Viet Minh should attack in Delta, now doubtful whether more than 4,000 Frenchmen could get out of Haiphong alive." (751G.00/7-2254)

latter without reinforcements until end of September and could hold it indefinitely with two, certainly with three, extra divisions. Without such reinforcements he said he was certain of his ability to hold Haiphong enclave with much less force than 85 battalions he had in North. In fact, he said that, given naval air support, he could have held Haiphong enclave with 35 to 40 battalions. Chevallier's assertion that military situation required armistice on present terms also overlooks our conditional offer to participate in war—conditional but on conditions which were reasonable and realizable.

HEATH

751G.00/7–2554 : Telegram

Ambassador Donald R. Heath to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PHNOM PENH, July 25, 1954—4 p. m.

30. Sent Saigon 4, Department 30 repeated information Paris 29, Geneva 27, Bangkok unnumbered. In Prime Minister's absence from city and Acting Foreign Minister's illness I passed information contained Deptel 7[2] to Director of Cabinet in Foreign Ministry, Prince Monissara. Prince said his government understands reason for US decision but deplores it nonetheless. It is certainly necessary, he said, that US reexamine methods of getting aid to forces here, and as is well known his government had for long advocated direct receipt of US aid rather than funneling it through French. It would be foolish, he continued, to expect the Chinese not to continue supplying and training the Viet Minh armies, and it would be disastrous for Cambodia not now to receive the arms necessary to build up its forces as soon as possible to an acceptable level.

Under armistice agreement, Cambodia apparently has right (without which—Prince said—its delegation would not have signed) to solicit foreign military aid in matériel, personnel and instructors to build "efficient" defense, and to join alliances compatible with UN Charter.

His government thus hopes, Prince said, that US will see its way to beginning soonest to furnish such aid to Cambodia. He asked me to inform my government of this hope, and further that if US thinks it necessary Cambodia would agree to work out arrangement to receive such direct US aid secretly.

Interestingly enough the Minister called at my house last night and, during course conversation, said he thought that with US help Thailand could aid Cambodia and supplement trained instructors.

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[1] Ambassador Heath was on visit in Cambodia.

[2] For telegram 261 to Paris, July 21, repeated to Phnom Penh as telegram 7, see p. 1866.

If armistice terms intend permit Cambodia this freedom, and idea would fit into broader US policy framework, I would strongly urge immediate renegotiation or renunciation of pentalateral to permit establishment of MAAG here and discreet but effective supply and training of Cambodian troops. Otherwise, if possible, I would hope we could manage to get necessary aid to them in other ways. This nation has the will and unity necessary to contribute to own defense, and its leaders have understanding of international realities, willingness to adapt to them and friendship for US which I think would augur well for success of such enterprise.

HEATH

Editorial Note

On July 26, 1954, the Bureau of Foreign Commerce of the Department of Commerce announced that all outstanding export licenses had been suspended for Communist-controlled areas of Indochina. This action was reported in the Department of State *Bulletin*, August 9, 1954, pages 212–213.

751G.00/7–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, July 27, 1954—1 p. m.

366. Repeated information Saigon 31. Guy La Chambre[1] came to see me today to talk about the future in Vietnam, and particularly about the future aid program. He said that his experts had studied the armistice document and that it was their view that U.S. military assistance to Vietnamese forces cld continue as long as it was channeled thru the French. He said that he hoped that we wld continue the military aid program as it was the French plan to build up the Vietnamese Army as rapidly as possible.

In this connection La Chambre said that many of the French Union units were composed of up to 60 percent Vietnamese. It was their intention to increase the percentage of Vietnamese in these units as rapidly as possible until they reached 100 percent. He said the French intended to detach their ablest officers from fighting units and assign them to training duty. He said the French feel that now that the fighting is ended they can greatly speed up the training and development of an autonomous Vietnamese Army with its own general staff. He said that the French had no intention of bringing back any large troop units to France or North Africa for at least the next six or eight months. This did not of course exclude the possibility of a few North African battalions which might be repatriated.

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[1] Minister for the Associated States.

La Chambre said that Bao Dai had told the French that the one most important thing was that the French Expeditionary Corps remain in South Vietnam and not be repatriated, as such repatriation wld be looked upon as abandonment. La Chambre said that he had talked this matter over with General Guillaume [2] who was in agreement.

La Chambre then said it wld be most important to make every effort possible to impress the Vietnamese with the virtues of democracy prior to the elections, and that this wld require substantial U.S. economic assistance to Vietnam which he hoped we wld be willing to undertake. I told him that there were no firm plans as yet but that we had every wish to do what was possible to win the elections. I then said that I was sure that we considered the problem basically a political one and that in our view the first thing to be done was to give the Vietnamese govt complete independence. I told him that if this were done I was sure we wld look much more sympathetically on the possibility of establishing a substantial program of economic assistance. La Chambre said that he was in complete agreement and he felt that actions of previous govts in negotiating basic treaties and then trying to hold back the attributes of sovereignty thru the interpretation of technical accords was a terrible policy. He said that Ely had already recd instrs to turn over the administration of the Port of Saigon, local administration throughout South Vietnam, meteorological services and civil aviation to the Vietnamese authorities. La Chambre said the present govt felt it was more important to actually turn over authority on the spot to the Vietnamese govt than to make a great show over the signature of general treaties. He said they had not as yet made up their minds whether to go through with the signature and ratification of the treaty which had been initialled this spring. They had some fear that doing this at this time with the Vietnamese who were now only responsible in the southern part of Vietnam wld give the impression of creating a permanent division of the country. However, in spite of their uncertainty on this subject they were proceeding rapidly to give actual authority to the Vietnamese govt and to building up an autonomous Vietnamese Army.

La Chambre then said that Diem constituted a certain problem as the bulk of his support came from the Catholic provinces of the north and Diem had very little support in the south and did not get along well with the various sects in that region. He said he felt that Diem shld remain as part of any govt that was formed because of his high moral standing and because he wld help with the Catholic population which remained in the north under Vietnam control. He clearly indicated, however, that he did not think that Diem was suitable to continue as prime minister.

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[2] Chief of the General Staff of the French Armed Forces.

He then said that part of the difficulty in Vietnam came from the Bao Dai regime which was in effect a Mandarin regime and disliked by many of the peasants. Therefore, he felt the time had come to gradually ease Bao Dai out of the picture and create a truly democratic govt in south Vietnam. He offered no indications of just how the removal of Bao Dai cld be brought about.

Concerning the elections two years hence, La Chambre said that there were probably one and a half to two million more people in the northern zone than in the southern, but that he felt that this disparity wld be largely nullified by the movement of refugees from the north to the south. He expected a minimum of 500,000, and possibly as many as a million refugees. He said he felt that shelter and treatment accorded to these refugees wld be of the greatest psychological importance in Vietnam and he hoped that we wld help with this problem.

Dillon

751G.5/7–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET Saigon, July 27, 1954—7 p. m.

345. Repeated information Paris 130.

1. At this early date after the Geneva agreements, we are unable to see the exact dimensions of the necessary aid program from FY 1954 and FY 1955 funds. However, we envisage that as in the past this aid will need to continue in the three forms of military end items, Associated States military budget support, and economic aid. Probably first will decline, and latter two need increase (See Tousfo 106 sent Paris USOM 25).[1]

2. As we at present see it, economic aid will be urgently needed for refugee work, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. We are unable as yet to place a figure on the amount needed, but believe that refugee work alone will absorb more than the 25 million at present assigned to USOM. Balance of funds needed will depend upon amount of economic aid that French will make available, and capacity countries to absorb aid and what US is trying to achieve in area. We doubt that even relatively firm information these points will be available for congressional action on Foreign Aid bill.

3. Budget support for Vietnamese Forces will need to be continued, and there is nothing in the Geneva agreements that would prevent our giving such aid. Previous government was planning military budget

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[1] Not printed.

of 25 billion piasters (720 million dollars) for 1955 (see Embdesp 23, July 19, 1954),[2] but we doubt that program for effective use such large sum could have been worked out. Cambodia and Laos will probably need increased budgetary support for armed forces. In summary, needed budget support from US for 1955 will probably equal or exceed 385 million dollars for 1954, since French aid to Associated States for this purpose will probably be very small at best.

4. We are unable comment on need for budget support French Expeditionary Force (FTEO). However, would point out that in past such support was based on need keep FTEO as fighting force in Indochina. At present, must balance need to keep FTEO in Indochina to maintain order, and the certain adverse political repercussions of the FTEO remaining. As we understand the French position, the FTEO will remain. However, we might let FTEO remain at French expense rather than ours, and let it become discreetly known that we are no longer giving budget support to French forces in Indochina.

5. As we read the agreement,[3] military end items can continue to be supplied, e.g., for Vietnam, such matériel as is worn out or used up may be replaced (Article 17 *b*). This would permit a very intensive training program, for example for there will certainly be enough equipment and matériel in South Vietnam, after evacuation of the north, for training all of the troops that can be made available. For Laos and Cambodia, additional equipment to meet legitimate defense needs can be brought in.

6. Article 17 prohibits introduction of reinforcements of arms and ammunition, except for replacement. This applies only to Vietnam, however, and not to Cambodia and Laos. We presume this means that imports are prohibited, and that there is no ban on introduction of additional arms and ammunition manufactured within the country. Only present facilities for such manufacture are within Viet Minh Zone. There is no ban on establishing such facilities in Vietnam area.

7. We are more and more convinced that to be really effective our aid must be channeled directly to Associated States and not through France.

We would have to have more control in order to make this aid effective, including auditing, a direct voice in allocation of foreign exchange (which we would be largely providing) and import licenses, etc. We should have direct part in planning military and economic programs. We should train national armies to extent allowed by terms of truce.

8. Above preliminary thoughts forwarded in view fact aid appropriations not yet voted for FY 1955. We see need for aid to Associated

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[2] Not printed.

[3] The agreement on cessation of hostilities in Vietnam; for text, see vol. XVI, p. 1505.

States excluding FTEO at approximately same level as that in FY 1954 and envisaged for FY 1955, although not in same form as envisaged. If elections in 1956 are to have favorable outcome, and we believe there is chance for such favorable outcome, but only with strong direct US assistance, total aid must be at about same level as envisaged and administration such aid must be more flexible.

9. This is joint Embassy–USOM–MAAG telegram.

HEATH

751G.00/7–2754 : Telegram

The Chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in Indochina (O'Daniel) to the Department of the Army[1]

TOP SECRET

SAIGON, July 27, 1954.
[Received 8:40 p. m.]

MG 2063A. Information Secretary Defense, JCS, Secretary State, CINCPAC and AmEmbassy Saigon. I was invited by [name deleted] visit his office a. m. 27 July 1954. . . . Opened discussion inquiring if US would train Vietnamese army. My reply this now being considered US. He estimated 50,000 regional troops and 56 Vietnamese battalions from Tonkin Delta area desire transfer to south (my estimate this overly optimistic). Plans being made accordingly. Desire US training as soon as possible. Anxious US MAAG remain here. Suspicion that we turning our backs on Vietnam. I assured him that I felt such was not the case. [Name deleted] asked outright will we continue support.

[Name deleted] stated Diem and entire present government strongly anti-Communist and nationalistic. [Names deleted] desire US advisors all echelons of government. Loyal Vietnamese will be selected for offices but will need and desire US advice. [Name deleted] remarked that with such US help we can survive but without it Vietnam is condemned. In addition to wanting US aid, nationalist group in government, [name deleted] stated Vietnam must have strong army and cannot have it without US assistance advisory capacity as well as matériel. I remarked that no doubt are discussing it at home. Considering fact that Vietnam Government has not been strong Bao Dai might try to change present government any time. Therefore we need assurances of intent and show of strength on part Vietnam. [Name deleted] acknowledged this and said that is what they were striving for. I mentioned Communists apply sound war-like combat principles in war they are waging in all fields. Present situation made to order for Communists favorite maneuver on battleground where now they need fear no armed interference. Mentioned that drastic measures need to be taken for

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[1] This Army message was transmitted via Department of State channels.

Vietnam for assistance. [Name deleted] agreed. He enumerated measures that need be taken. [Name deleted] stated that Diem considering buy land for government distribution to people (there are 8 or 10 landed estates area Saigon). Diem has decreed that refugees from north would be permitted take up temporary abode landed estates.

[Name deleted] fears France appeal Bao Dai for another Vietnamese Government more suitable French purposes. [Name deleted] mentioned that people of Vietnam have great confidence in US because of results Korea and Philippines, Vietnamese people feel that US honest and unselfish in efforts to help others. He stated this why Vietnam wants US advisors in all departments. Stated there enough good men nationalist leanings set up government and with guidance can be good one. Stated two things thought needed. System of alliances such as US and Philippine and opportunity become member SE Asia pact. He stated that the Vietnamese Government must get out from under French control. That present government desires do this. His opinion that Tam and Huu want to form another government with French interests predominant not so nationalistic. He stated now impossible use French assistance for training Vietnamese army since entire country has lost confidence French due recent experiences. He inquired whether possible send Vietnamese military personnel US and Philippine schools. I mentioned possibility of the Philippines assisting all fields. [Name deleted] said yes in case US did not, this would be good idea. I feel that perhaps behind the scenes we might influence situation here through Philippines should we not take active part ourselves. I am informed by reliable sources in Philippines that there are now members and former members Philippine army trained in US who are available use for training here.

. . . .

We discussed need retain present government for long time to give it opportunity show its worth. He stated Vietnam needs US money, US matériel, US personnel help everywhere. He recognizes this very dangerous time preparing for future. [Name deleted] mentioned thought afraid we were pulling out. We discussed possibility uprising due cease-fire agreement. I mentioned it would be bad impression US should such thing occur. US would wonder could it happen to her sometime. He stated there no comparison in the feelings of the Vietnamese as to US and France. That US had impressed all SE Asia by its honesty and what it has done for Philippines and others. Hope for same assistance and results. He stated France must be forced get out. Stated "why don't you cut off all support to them if they don't agree to what you want." He feels that in order US establish proper policy re Asia it was important that we use Asiatic methods. Stated our political position entirely too reserved and soft. Stated when Japs came Vietnam in 1940–1941 they threw peace terms on the table and stated "this is it; sign", and the French signed. I mentioned Diem advisability securing assistance in preparing conscription program. Perhaps some of General Hershey's[2] people could be borrowed for this. . . . stated hoped US would furnish means further guerrilla action against Viet Minh. Said why not send fiscal people here to apportion money and have them in all departments and watch distribution of money and in case money authorized that it not be given in large amounts in one package but smaller amounts broken down according to the needs of various projects.

I inquired if [name deleted] was also expressing sentiments of Diem and he assured me this was so in every case. Our conference lasted for two hours and we terminated with reemphasis by [name deleted] on need for US assistance in all fields in order Vietnam and SE Asia survive.

Comment: I feel there is great opportunity US assist in pointing Vietnam right direction. This area can be used as testing ground to combat—the warfare Communist would hope employ everywhere including US. I personally feel that consideration should be given to making effort toward establishing US strongly here. I feel we should take steps see that present Vietnamese Government remains long enough to prove itself; that we take active part in all fields here. . . .

My interpretation and Embassy re cease-fire agreement that we can bring in personnel here until 11 August 1954 and I strongly urge personnel taking part in Vietnamese army training and assisting all government echelons be rushed here as soon as possible. I feel that arrangements should be made so that US take over entire training program Vietnam army and pressure be brought to bear on French toward this end.

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[2] Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, Director of Selective Service.

751G.00/7–2854 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, July 28, 1954—3 p. m.

352. Repeated information Paris 136, Hanoi 104, priority Tokyo 7. Limit distribution. Vietnamese Government must have a minimum of 2,000 twenty-man tents within next few days or its whole program of evacuating anti-Communist refugees from north will fail, since without them it will be impossible to provide adequate emergency housing. If refugees arrive here and no accommodation is provided, that will be known immediately in north. Due to fact that adequate accommodations were not immediately provided in staging area at

Hanoi when southern Tonkin delta provinces were evacuated, hundreds of refugees returned to their villages. Department should intervene with FOA headquarters and Far Eastern command to ship immediately 2,000 tents already requested. Negotiation seems to be proceeding on somewhat routine basis, whereas this is a disaster emergency.

New subject: It may be necessary for our Navy, and possibly Air Force, to assist in transport of refugees and such action would have most helpful morale effect. However, no request is made at this time pending discussions with French.

HEATH

751G.00/7–2854 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, July 28, 1954—4 p. m.

353. Repeated information Paris 134, Geneva 74, Hanoi unnumbered. I do not want to appear alarmist (re Deptel 323, July 26)[1] but must state it is of utmost importance that a public letter by President making clear that we are not giving up our program of aiding Vietnam be sent without delay. Belief is almost nationwide that we are "abandoning" Vietnam and that belief is specifically affecting government's program of evacuating anti-Communist refugees from North Vietnam. President's letter should specifically state that we will aid in evacuation and resettlement of these refugees.

HEATH

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[1] For the substance of telegram 323 to Saigon, July 26, see footnote 4, p. 1874.

751G.00/7–2854 : Telegram

The Chargé at Phnom Penh (Goodman) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, July 28, 1954—5 p. m.

32. Sent Saigon 43, repeated information Paris 30, Geneva 28, Bangkok unnumbered. As additional bits of information concerning Geneva settlement have filtered back to government here, its members have manifested an increasing gratification over terms which its delegation won. Since Foreign Ministry still has not received text of agreements through its channel I have made available to Acting Foreign Minister Poc Thoun English version transmitted Secto 715[1] which he is having translated. Government now feels that its sovereignty and

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[1] Telegram Secto 715 from Geneva, July 21, is not printed, but for the texts of the final agreements of the Conference, see vol. xvi, pp. 1505 ff.

national will should be clear to world, and that its freedom of action remains complete, while Viet Minh have contracted to leave country. However, this morning Foreign Minister repeated to me certainty expressed by his cabinet director last Saturday (Embassy telegram 30 to Department)[2] that Chinese Communists would not halt military aid to Viet Minh during truce, and that it more than ever necessary for Cambodia to continue receiving aid from US.

Poc Thoun said he received yesterday Tep Phan's report of his interview with Chou En-lai when latter demanded stringent limitations Cambodian sovereignty in exchange for Viet Minh withdrawal, and insisted this country accept no US instructors. Foreign Minister said this episode now by-passed by events by [*but*] that description of Chou's attitude underlines nature of continuing threat facing Cambodia. Chinese Foreign Minister was harsh and uncompromising and clearly thought he could dictate terms of settlement. Poc Thoun said his government, while certain it won a last minute victory at Geneva, feels that what the settlement has really given them is respite during which they must strive mightily to prepare for next emergency, which they believe will be on them after Vietnamese elections in 1956. He said that Vietnam has been badly hurt, and history of Communist subversion of unstable border states does not lead to optimism concerning that country's future. Cambodia must proceed on assumption that Vietnam will end up under Communists. Thus this nation faces Herculean task of restoring security, building viable [garble], and establishing new economic base.

Both Foreign Minister and Finance Minister, whom I saw later in day, emphasized importance of economic problems. Feeling it necessary to hypothesize an increasingly hostile Vietnam they stated positively that Cambodia must have own currency and eventually pull out of Customs Union. During near future latter can continue, but one of first Cambodian efforts must be to reorient economy. To some extent this will be done by increasing use of Bangkok as port of foreign trade instead of Saigon, and to some extent by building up Phnom Penh port, but they believe there is long range necessity to build long visualized port of Ream on Gulf of Siam, which French long ago promised to build but which Cambodians feel they will have to do themselves. My despatch 30[3] reported plans to survey projected railroad line to Ream, and Finance Minister has presented to cabinet seven year plan to build port for about 950 million piasters.

Both Ministers expressed full awareness magnitude of these problems and iterated hope of US aid, without which they said Cambodia cannot meet challenges it faces. They, and all other Cambodian leaders with whom I have spoken, are tremendously encouraged by President's decision to send Ambassador here, and although they face future with new understanding of immensity of problems they inherited along with their independence, they are also confident and determined to make the most of their opportunities.

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[2] For telegram 30 from Phnom Penh, July 25, see p. 1878.

[3] Not printed.

GOODMAN

751G.00/7–2754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, July 28, 1954—7:58 p. m.

366. FYI. Intelligence reports from Vietnam indicate good many nationalists are waiting see what policy United States will be toward government Vietnam and whether we will allow French attempt reestablish their former degree of control over retained Vietnam. There have been other intelligence reports to effect French are undermining Diem, perhaps with view to establishing regime headed by former Prime Minister Tam or possibly former Prime Minister Huu and made up mainly of southerners previously identified as Cochin-China separatists, morally corrupt and politically subservient to France. These French maneuvers reportedly began before cease-fire agreements were concluded and were probably intended offer insurance against a refusal by Diem to accept terms to be agreed on at Geneva. Since Diem has gone as far toward accepting cease-fire as we believe he could have done without losing all nationalist support we believe interests United States and France will best be served under present circumstances by supporting Diem government. End FYI.

Please find appropriate occasion talk to Mendes-France along following lines:

"There has been considerable recent speculation about US share in aid program for retained Vietnam and question has been voiced as to whether US assistance should be given directly to Vietnamese or in part channelled through French. We are prepared to contribute positively toward solving problem of Vietnam but feel we should know first what prospects are for Diem Govt and how Mendes-France himself sees situation.

"From information at our disposal, Prime Minister Diem, while inexperienced, seems to have demonstrated independence and personal qualities which appeal to his compatriots. Before establishing our position we feel we must know whether his govt is likely to last, and whether it enjoys support of French Govt, or whether French are thinking in terms of replacing Diem (as La Chambre hinted to you,

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[1] Drafted by Sturm of PSA and Tyler of WE. Repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 348.

Paris tel 366).[2] If latter is true, we should have to take into account character and prospects of any successor govt. Our objective is that US aid should contribute to strengthening of a Vietnamese Govt whose strength derives from wide popular support and whose appeal extends beyond line of demarcation into North. We would not wish to give aid to govt which did not enjoy support and confidence of Vietnamese people. Prospects of keeping part, if not all, of Vietnam in free world, and indeed of setting up effective SEA security arrangements are intimately associated, in our minds, with manner in which retained Vietnam is helped to attain sense of independence and of responsibility for its own future."[3]

DULLES

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[2] Dated July 27, p. 1879.

[3] In telegram 409 from Paris, July 29, Ambassador Dillon stated that in his opinion it would be neither appropriate nor effective to raise this matter with Premier Mendès-France who was fully preoccupied with other matters. The Ambassador therefore intended to approach Minister La Chambre instead. (751G.00/7-2954)

751G.5/7-2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, July 29, 1954—7 p.m.

366. Repeated information Paris 138. Vietnamese State Secretary for Defense has asked General O'Daniel that US take over entire training program for Vietnamese National Army.[1] General O'Daniel recommends that this request be granted as I do. At same time I recognize that it may be contrary to present American policy and we might meet objections of Viet Minh and possibly International Supervisory Commission if we increased American military personnel to extent of taking over wholesale training activities in Vietnam. If that is case, then General O'Daniel could be prepared to undertake a limited training program consisting of independent operation of one replacement training center and military advisers to two Vietnamese divisions. He believes that he could achieve this smaller program without increasing total number of US military personnel now in Vietnam (MAAG plus Air Force mechanics at Tourane, cf. Embassy telegram 301, repeated Paris 111).[2] However, he would "rotate out" Air Force group at Tourane, reduce Air Force and naval personnel now assigned MAAG, and replace by military instructors. We assume this could be done under armistice agreement since there would be no total increase in American military personnel involved.

I feel certain that General O'Daniel would succeed in a training program whether entire or reduced both because of superiority of American methods and willingness of Vietnam forces to take American training as opposed to French instruction. Such action should have a considerable effect on shaken morale of remaining Vietnam and is desired by Vietnam Government.

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[1] See Army telegram MG 2063A, July 27, p. 1883.

[2] Not printed. (750G.00/7-2454)

It is assumed that such training program of any dimensions would be agreeable to General Ely. Ely a week ago told me he still favored American participation in military training in Vietnam.

If Department approves, I believe that before any commitments are made to Vietnam Government, matter should first be taken up through General Ely. If a plan is to be approved, it should be gotten under way with least possible delay.

HEATH

751G.00/7–2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, July 29, 1954—8 p. m.

370. Repeated information Paris 139, Hanoi unnumbered. Following our discussion of refugee problem yesterday (my telegram 360)[1] Diem discussed political situation. He said apologetically that reports he had offered his resignation on July 22 were correct. (When I saw him on July 23, my telegram 304,[2] he indicated he was not planning to resign.)

Diem said he felt he was honor-bound to offer resignation to Bao Dai, since he had failed to prevent partition of Vietnam. (Bao Dai had replied immediately by cable refusing the resignation and asking for cabled assurance that Diem would continue on in office, which Diem immediately gave.)

I told Diem of my talk with General Phuong, Cao Daist Commander; that I had urged Phuong to support new government and latter had said he was willing to do so if government invited his support.[3] I intimated it might be well to assure himself of support of that sect which was more important and stood on higher ground than Binh Xuyen and Hoa Haos. Diem replied he had rather good impression of Phuong and agreed that Cao Daists were on higher moral plane than other two sects. He said trouble was these sects insisted on retaining full administrative powers in regions which they dominated.

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[1] Telegram 360 from Saigon, July 28, is not printed.

[2] For telegram 304 from Saigon, July 23, see p. 1872.

[3] Ambassador Heath and General O'Daniel met with General Phuong at the request of the latter on the evening of July 27. The conversation was reported in telegram 348 from Saigon, July 28. (751G.00/7–2854)

Diem said he was prepared to announce Cabinet changes and additions. He had offered Cabinet appointments to several good men, all of whom had asked for several days to consider his offer. He said that "people" had expected him to dismiss incompetent officials and punish corrupt ones. He wanted to replace Mayor of Saigon at earliest possible moment. He planned to proceed with a program of "purification" but he could not do so until he had a definite government firmly established and particularly until he had police under his control.

He went on to say he felt convinced of General Ely's loyalty but there was no doubt that lower echelon Frenchmen were encouraging pretentions of the sects in south Vietnam. After all French had made and paid these "confessional armies" and the sects were quite ready to permit continuing French overlordship if they saw any profits or power in so doing.

Diem said French Government should be grateful to him for he had prevented demonstrations against French when news of Geneva accord had become known.

HEATH

751G.00/7-3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, July 30, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received 5:45 a. m.]

404. Repeated information Paris 145, Hanoi unnumbered. Re Paris telegram 366, sent Department, repeated Saigon 31.[1] La Chambre's statement that it was his expert view of armistice that US military assistance to Vietnamese forces could continue as long as channeled through French is surprising and one would be inclined to say disingenuous. There is nothing in armistice to prevent US or any other country giving budgetary assistance for Vietnamese defense effort. There is certainly nothing that even implies that only France could extend such aid. What armistice does prevent is sending fresh troops and military matériel, except for replacements. French have of course gained influence and dollar exchange through our channeling through them 385 million for Associated States defense budgets in 1954 (great bulk going to Vietnam).

We are [*were?*] willing to let French get credit and dollar exchange as long as French Expeditionary Force kept up fight. There was also advantage that French were much better equipped to control Vietnam expenditures than we. It would have been matter of expense, time, and difficulty for us to set up auditing commission here, particularly in view of fact that English is little spoken in Indochina. Except for this last consideration, there is now no longer any apparent advantage in continuing to pass this aid through French. Only possible valid reason for continuing to do so for a time would be that otherwise French would decide greatly reduce their forces in Vietnam in near future. That of course should not occur until Vietnam forces can be reorganized and strengthened. I do not say that we should begin immediately giving direct budgetary support to Vietnam Defense Ministry. In first place it would take some weeks or even months to negotiate arrangements and organize control staff; secondly, I can see that at this precise moment we would not want to lower French prestige and influence by no longer dealing through them in this matter. But we must shortly do so because chances of building anything solid militarily or politically in Vietnam as long as French retain a dominant position are extremely slight. Long prevalent distrust of French has intensified alarmingly as result of partition of Vietnam consented to, or rather negotiated, by French with Viet Minh. This distrust will be increased if French, as seems likely, send a representative to Viet Minh (Paris telegram 397 sent Department).[2] Prime Minister Diem told me 28th that French officials in Hanoi had already made some objection to removal of contents of Hanoi museums to south Vietnam, presumably because of fear of objections by Viet Minh. It is altogether likely that special deal will be made with latter to allow continued operation of French business and cultural enterprises in north and that will tend further to increase southern mistrust of French.

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[1] Dated July 27, p. 1879.

HEATH

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[2] In telegram 397 from Paris, July 28, not printed, Ambassador Dillon reported that the French were considering the appointment of a representative in the Viet Minh zone, possibly Jean Sainteny, former Commissioner in Tonkin. (751G.00/7–2854)

751G.00/7–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, July 30, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received 6:49 a. m.]

405. Repeated information Paris 146, Hanoi unnumbered. In further comment (mytel 380 [*404*] [1]) on La Chambre's statements reported Paris telegram 366 to Department,[2] I would say:

1. I thoroughly agree that in our own security interest we should increase substantially our economic assistance to remaining Vietnam,

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[1] *Supra.*
[2] Dated July 27, p. 1879.

with view to building up strong government there but not necessarily with idea of winning nation wide elections, which in our view probably will not take place. There should be of course free elections in South Vietnam and I am fairly confident that present government or good successor one could win them, given time and opportunity to prepare proper conditions, and would be willing to have them staged under UN supervision. It is certain that Viet Minh will never allow truly free elections in North Vietnam; in fact armistice provides that they should be supervised by international supervisory commission, one of whose three members is a Communist state, another India, which on record to date has shown no desire to offend Communist China, of which Viet Minh are satellite. Truly free elections in North Vietnam would require not only neutral international supervision of actual voting but absolute freedom of non-Communist parties to campaign for months preceding elections without restraint or surveillance by Communist authorities. Last will never happen.

2. It is difficult for me to accept as entirely candid La Chambre's statement that French Government entertained some fears that going through with signature and ratification of treaties initialled last spring would give impression of creating permanent division of country. Not to sign treaties would appear to Vietnam Government, and rightly, as due to French fear of offending Viet Minh and preventing some possible arrangement with latter. Failure to sign would likewise confirm Vietnamese fears that French have never intended other than to "hold them on a leash".

3. I am disturbed in La Chambre's intimations that he does not think Diem suitable to continue as Prime Minister, since latter's support was mainly in north and he did not "get along" with three sects in south. I think that statement reflects hopes and possibly plans of former colonial administrators in Ministry of Associated States who would like to set up a government that would be not only friendly to France but would accept French influence. It is possible that using French influence on "sects" in South Vietnam, on Vietnam national army as long as it is under command of General Hinh, and promoting political schemes of Tam, Huu, and other former Prime Ministers, would result in forcing Diem Government out of office and replacing it with a pliant successor regime. But that such a regime could be made solid in relatively little time at its disposal is extremely unlikely. It would not enjoy confidence of masses and although latter might be able to do nothing about it they would be more than ever susceptible to Viet Minh subversion.

HEATH

851G.16/7-3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL Saigon, July 30, 1954—9 p. m.
[Received 11:47 a. m.]

386. An honest land reform program intelligently and aggressively applied may offer one of the best means available for meeting Viet Minh challenge:[1]

(1) Land reform offers Diem Ministry an opportunity to gain popular support for Vietnamese Government.

(2) If promulgated soon and properly publicized, land reform may attract numerous refugees from Viet Minh zone before bamboo curtain is clamped down tightly.

(3) Land reform cannot be applied if present poor security conditions continue to exist, but in conjunction with better military program than exists today and refugee resettlement it offers practicable means of bringing about restoration of law and order since assurances to peasants that they will be permitted to keep land they occupy may encourage them to cooperate with Central Government.

(4) It may provide only enduring solution to imminent problem of resettling peasant refugees from Tonkin delta.

(5) Earlier Vietnamese land reform programs were largely talk, but if program can be developed that is more than just sham, it will offer one of best propaganda weapons against the Viet Minh. Viet Minh has given much publicity to its own program (see Embassy despatch 302 February 9)[2] but its land redistribution plans will be faced with well-known scarcity of land in one of the world's most densely populated rural areas, whereas land is relatively plentiful in South Vietnam. Also possible that word of mouth reports of a good Vietnamese land reform will circulate in Viet Minh zone and partially overcome barrier, in form of Viet Minh censorship and lack of radios, against conventional type of American or Vietnamese propaganda program.

The Diem Ministry's present program as set forth two weeks ago by the Ministry of Agriculture is inadequate for present needs, for it requires large amounts of money, trained personnel that is unavailable, and stable political situation. Briefly, it envisages small [plot] projects involving the purchase of several hundred hectares of land, expensive land improvement projects, and numerous social services (see FBIS-S 160200 July 15).

We should urge the government to drop this plan or include it in one providing for expropriation of all land holdings above modest maximum (except for industrial type agricultural enterprises, such as rubber and tea plantations) and grant of provisional land titles to squatters cultivating small holdings and to all landless peasants and refugees who want to acquire land. The grant of provisional titles should be contingent on payment of a fixed percentage of the crop to the government over a period of ten to twenty years. Landowners might receive compensation for their expropriated land in the form of ten to twenty years bonds, payable in money equivalent each year of a fixed percentage of paddy crop. For example, a landowner might receive ten percent of value of average paddy crop of expropriated land over a fifteen year period, amount paid being determined each year by average selling price of paddy at farm from January to March. This system would offer landowner some protection against inflation.

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[1] In telegram 482 to Saigon, Aug. 6, the Department expressed agreement with this view and suggested that an expert technician be sent to Vietnam to make an on-the-spot assessment of the problem. (851G.16/7-3054)

[2] Not printed.

Most landowners will oppose expropriation, but against their objections following arguments can be made:

(1) Present land reform legislation although full of loopholes, already provides precedents for maximum holdings (in South Vietnam 30 to 100 hectares, a maximum that might be considerably reduced) and for provisional grants to squatter.

(2) Only in well-pacified areas, of which there are few, is large landowner receiving rent. Hence, few would be losing income as a result of expropriation of their property.

(3) The landowner's hope of receiving rent from his land is contingent on pacification, but pacification itself may be contingent on a more equitable system of land distribution than has existed in the past.

(4) The alternative to a government-sponsored program may be a Communist one. Expropriation of [*in*] the Viet Minh zone has been tantamount to confiscation.

(5) The traditional land holding system in South Vietnam probably did not encourage progressive agricultural methods. Large landowner did not work land himself, but rented it in small lots to tenants, who acquired no rights to improvements they might have made, or to large farmers, who in turn subleased the land.

There is probably a large amount of land available for redistribution and settlement. One of chief rice export houses last year estimated that twenty to thirty percent of rice land in South Vietnam lay fallow. Furthermore, in most provinces of South Vietnam there has been considerable decrease in population since 1945.

Land reform program will probably have to be started in those areas where there is a reasonable degree of security and land is available for a refugee resettlement program. If past experience with refugees in the Transbassac may be used as an example, we can expect security conditions in areas of resettlement to improve rapidly. Moyer[3] is requested to give his suggestions.

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[3] Raymond T. Moyer, Regional Director for Far Eastern Operations, Foreign Operations Administration.

See also Tousfo 122 and mission cable which follows,[4] discussing technical aspects of land reform as seen here.

This is joint USOM/Embassy message.

HEATH

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[4] Neither printed.

751G.00/7–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET

PARIS, July 30, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 5:25 p. m.]

438. Repeated information Saigon 40. Re Deptel 366 rptd Saigon as 348[1] and Embtel 409 rptd Saigon as 34.[2] We took up subject of reftel with La Chambre today citing our concern with future in Vietnam, question of effectiveness of Diem and possible alternate govts, importance of degree of independence French were prepared to grant to new state of Vietnam and great importance decisions on these questions would have in determining attitudes Vietnamese nationalists and ultimate success in retaining new state in free world. We referred to necessity putting into operation effective aid program and problems to be faced in determining its nature, manner of distribution, etc.

In reply, La Chambre stated it was his and Mendes-France's firm intention to work in closest possible manner with us on all questions concerning Indochina. They were determined to do everything possible to win the elections ("we would use devil himself in order to win") and realized that success could only be achieved if both France and Vietnam enjoyed full moral, political and economic support of US.

La Chambre said that for moment impossible to make any decision regarding Ngo Dinh Diem, for govt itself was undecided and was sending Claude Cheysson, former deputy political adviser to High Commissioner and recently member of French Delegation at Geneva ("Chauvel's right arm") to Indochina to make a quick inspection and recommendations to govt. Cheysson's report, together with Ely's and others would largely determine govt's decisions. Cheysson leaves Paris tonight.

Govt is wary of Diem, primarily because they fear his lack of experience and unrealistic approach to problems may outweigh advantage his personal integrity. Moreover a great deal of his support came from Catholics in north and what was needed now was man with support in south. On other hand govt realizes that Diem's personal honesty and unquestionable patriotism were great asset and they were therefore reluctant throw support to alternate until something better was really in prospect.

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[1] Dated July 28, p. 1888.
[2] See footnote 3, p. 1889.

They were thinking tentatively and subject entirely to Cheysson's and other reports of possibility supporting retention Diem but advocating broadening his govt. Broadening might even be extended to including Tran Van Huu of whom French are wary but who they believe must be contended with. They are aware of Huu's toying with extreme left including Viet Minh and his anti-Bao Dai sentiments and personal ambitions. They think, however, he is better under control than loose and that his over-developed political sense might be put to good use in balancing Diem's own under-developed political sense. Furthermore, former Prime Minister Tam is also factor to be dealt with. They regard him as strong man whose power and effectiveness might prove useful in getting things done but whose reliability is questionable. La Chambre was not at all sure that Tam might not attempt to play with Viet Minh along lines govt of "national coalition". Nevertheless he too was in running and would be subject to Cheysson's and other inspection.

Regarding independence, La Chambre stated unequivocally that policy of the Mendes-France govt was to grant total independence to states "without retaining anything in the back of bureau drawer". They intended to do so without delay but not through conventions supporting treaties of independence and association which were initialed under Laniel government. Formula would be entirely discarded in favor of following stages: First, transfer of all possible technical services to Vietnamese without delay. Orders have already been issued to Ely to do so before July 31. Secondly, those functions which require quadrilateral decision to be examined at Four-Power meeting of 3 states and France to take place in Paris on or about August 10. They include question of common currency, attachment to Franc Zone, etc. Finally any remaining functions to be turned over to Vietnamese Govt as soon after Four-Power meeting as possible. At moment it is envisaged that permanent basis of relationship between two countries will be as stated in two basic treaties (totally independent and thereafter associated within French Union on free and equal basis). There will be no further haggling about petty details.

Question of Bao Dai's future role is, of course, also involved but it will be treated as phase two after other more immediate decisions are reached.

La Chambre expressed complete agreement with the sentiments expressed in last two paras reftel which were given him in full in paraphrased form.

During conversation La Chambre expressed concern regarding new Vietnamese Ambassador to US Tran Van Chuong. He did not mention the forthcoming trip of Raphael-Leygues and Buu Hoi (Embtel 35 to Saigon rptd as 420 to Dept)[3] but we observed that Raphael-Leygues was waiting in antechamber to see La Chambre as we left. It is apparent that Cheysson's trip is an official mission while Raphael-Leygues is of secret character.

DILLON

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[3] Telegram 420 from Paris, July 29, read in part as follows: "Jacques Raphael-Leygues, counselor French Union and Commissaire Principal de la Marine, has informed us confidentially he proceeding Saigon next few days secret mission for Mendès-France. Will have as associate on mission Prince Buu Hoi, cousin of Bao Dai and well known scientist, long time resident of France, counselor to Ho Chi Minh at Fontainebleau in 1946." The purpose of the trip was to investigate privately the political situation in Vietnam. (751G.00/7–2954)

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file, Dulles–Herter series

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President

WASHINGTON, August 2, 1954.

Subject: Indochina Statement[1]

I have given considerable thought to the possibility of issuing a statement about certain heretofore unclarified aspects of the Indochina matter.

I got together a large amount of documentation which I studied over the weekend.

I came to the conclusion that it was not possible at this time to issue anything like a full "White Paper". This would require the consent of other governments to publish exchanges of notes, etc., which consent would surely be unobtainable at this time.

I composed the annexed, which is limited to two aspects: (1) the French suggestions for U.S. air action in Indochina; and (2) our efforts for "united action."

I think that something along these lines could be published without impropriety so far as regards foreign governments, although probably the proposed texts should be submitted to Aldrich and Dillon for their observations in this respect.

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[1] At his news conference of July 21, President Eisenhower stated that the United States might possibly release a history of its role in the Indochina crisis. (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, p. 648) Secretary Dulles received confirmation of the President's interest in such a statement during telephone conversations with Press Secretary Hagerty on July 21 and with the President on July 26. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations") Drafts prepared in the Department of State with the active participation of the Secretary, and related material, may be found in file 751G.00; PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"; Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Indochina"; and Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file, Dulles–Herter series.

This memorandum was accompanied by a draft statement which is not printed. According to notes filed with the source text, the President read the draft on Aug. 3 and made certain corrections. For the text of the statement as approved by the President, see telegram 689 to London, Aug. 3, p. 1915.

The statement would have the *advantage* of dispelling generally accepted rumors such as the United States proposed an air strike to save Dien Bien Phu, and the British vetoed it. The statement would have *disadvantages*. It might reopen controversy between Britain and France, although I have tried to avoid any provocative statements and have toned down differences. Perhaps more important is that it gives the Communists a "case study" of how we operate in these matters from the standpoint of our own Constitution and our desire not to "go it alone." This might tempt them in the future to try to make some close calculations—perhaps miscalculations—to our disadvantage.

I submit the matter to you for your verdict.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

125.456/8–254

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Executive Director of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Capella)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 2, 1954.

Subject: Closing of the American Consulate at Hanoi.[1]

Participants: The Secretary
Mr. Allen Dulles—CIA
Mr. Saltzman—O[2]
Mr. Wisner—CIA
Mr. Drumright—FE
Mr. Day—PSA
Mr. Blancke—PSA
Mr. Capella—FE/Ex

In response to a question by the Secretary as to the position of the French and British regarding continued representation in Hanoi, Mr. Drumright replied that although we have working level views from both London and Saigon we do not yet know the intentions of the French and the British. The Secretary requested that we find out, with the thought that we may wish to act in concert with them. . . .

Mr. Allen Dulles took the position that we should not retreat and that if we had to get out of North Vietnam we should be forced out. Mr. Wisner thought that by remaining in Hanoi we might have an opportunity to drive a wedge between Communist China and the Vietminh whereas if we got out no such opportunity would be afforded. It was also thought that the Vietminh might behave differently than the Communists behaved in China towards our officials because of their desire to trade with the United States.

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[1] During a telephone conversation of July 20, Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence, told the Secretary of State that it was important that the Hanoi Consulate remain open. (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations")

[2] Charles E. Saltzman, Under Secretary of State for Administration.

Mr. Drumright pointed out that the matter of trade had already been settled and that it was that we would not trade with Communists in China. He also referred to the treatment that we had received from the Communists in China. He also pointed out, and the Secretary agreed, that serious consideration would have to be given to the reaction on the part of the U.S. public to any abuse which might be leveled at our officials in Hanoi and that we should be prepared for criticism when it was evident that there was nothing that the United States could do to prevent such abuse. The Vietminh might, however, behave properly as long as the international armistice group was in Hanoi. Mr. Day pointed out that once the Vietminh moved in our communications would have to be in clear, and . . . . Mr. Drumright suggested that we may wish to determine Congressional opinion regarding this problem. The Secretary stated that we should first reach a decision in the Department and then inquire as to whether or not certain Congressmen have opinions regarding it. He thought that it would be a good idea to consult Congressman Judd on this problem. It was generally agreed that we would want to keep the question of closing the Consulate under review during the 80-day period and take final action on the basis of developments.

A proposed cable to Hanoi instructing the Consul to take no steps to close the Consulate was shown to the Secretary. He agreed that it should be sent. . . .

851G.00/8–354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET SAIGON, August 3, 1954—noon.

439. Repeated information Paris 160, Hanoi unnumbered. Re Depcirtel 50, July 22.[2] In Indochina an economic assistance program must be accompanied by development of a strong and effective political and military situation. However, while attempting to assist in creation of necessary political and military strength we must not wait to extend economic aid. As nationalism and anti-colonialism are perhaps two most important motivating factors in Vietnam politics today it is essential for psychological reasons that the American role not be too

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] For text of circular telegram 50, which requested the opinions of Far Eastern posts regarding aspects of expanded economic assistance, see volume XII.

much advertised. Vietnamese Government must convince its people that it is in a position of leadership rather than that it is being led and influenced too much by US or any other foreign government.

Following is summary reply to specific questions in letter July 20 from Assistant Secretary Robertson.[3]

a. There is a very real danger that Communists will ultimately take over power in south Vietnam by capitalizing on local social and economic instability and fervent nationalism, accompanied by pressures from Viet Minh in North Vietnam and strong guerrilla action by left-behind forces in South Vietnam. Propaganda would probably stress nationalism more than poverty of people. Danger of Communist take-over in Cambodia is more remote. In Laos danger is almost as present as in Vietnam. In both Cambodia and Laos, however, economic plight of inhabitants would be less important factor in such take-over, since there is little discontent among peasants over their present economic situation.

b. A major effort at social and economic progress is urgently necessary to strengthen Associated States politically and militarily against likelihood of Communist seizure of power.

c. To meet problems such as resettlement of refugees and reorganization of areas previously controlled by Viet Minh, a rapidly expanded rate of social and economic progress is essential and must be sought urgently and immediately in spite of lack of trained and efficient local personnel to administer a program.

d. US assistance would definitely create public and official reaction beneficial to US interest.

e. US aid should be channeled direct and in concentrated way in Indochinese countries. Reaction would be more favorable if this were case.

f. Reaction would be more favorable if US were sole contributor. Associated States are not interested in joint aid agreements. Any provisions of an economic nature included in SEATO should be of general nature.

g. In general throughout Far East, in the long-term, way to economic and social progress must be through industrialization in broadest sense of those countries, with improvement of agriculture a somewhat secondary item. Agricultural output must be improved to extent where it is possible to take care of expanding populations but no agricultural developments in long run will suffice to build up tolerable standard of living in Asia in view of population increases. In case of the states of Indochina, however, development of agriculture will for perhaps many years take priority over industrialization, since in underpopulated Indochina there is room for vast increase both of acreage and yield. Both for agricultural and eventual industrial development in Indochina it would be necessary to have roads and improved inland waterways and there are decided possibilities of hydroelectric development and very likely mining development as well. This is for long term view. Against immediate Communist threat programs of education, public health and in few cities housing projects are more important.

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[3] The letter under reference, which also requested information on economic assistance from various Far Eastern posts, is not printed. (FE files, lot 55 D 480)

h. At present time there would be no difficulty in conditioning economic aid in three countries on their improvement of their military force. All three countries desire to build up their military strength against Communist (Viet Minh) threat. However, I believe it would be unwise and unnecessary to condition an economic aid program on requirements for defense commitments since such a tie-in could be used against us effectively in Communist propaganda.

i. In their present state of opinion three Indochina countries would prefer aid direct from US. This is so because they have greater trust in our sincerity and ability to provide aid than they do in other countries. They are egotistically, and naturally, more interested in aid to themselves than for their neighbors. In fact, they would fear that the larger the geographic coverage the less aid they would get.

j. If governments do not institute better economic, social, and fiscal policies, an economic aid program would be little effective. In case of three Indochina countries they would not object to stipulations they follow policies conducive to social and economic improvement and they will accept expert assistance.

We realize and these countries realize that private American investment would bring benefits. However, if security for American investment is pushed too hard, these countries will become suspicious for all of them have had experience with private investment which they did not like. Now, while we are attempting to shore up a wobbly political and economic structure, is not the time to make a major issue of pressing for opportunities for private American investment.

k. Aid should be presented and carried out as government-to-government aid. US should stay largely in background, let government get half credit, and gain in strength. Under such conditions favorable publicity we would get would be as great, and unfavorable less. We must "sell" program to Congress and American people, but such "selling" should be done back at home, not over here to government and peoples of these countries.

l. Our rubber policy, or lack of it, has hurt us in this country. However, I do not believe commodity price agreement is answer, for it becomes sort of cartel and inhibits progress. Best we can do on that score is continue to maintain economic stability in US and to revise our tariff policies—in this country, more for psychological than economic benefits.

m. China is traditional enemy of Vietnam and is feared by Laos and Cambodia. This applies to Communist China as well as to any other China. Only a few intellectuals in Indochina believe Communist China has found solution for under-developed countries.

What three states of Indochina want and need for short term to help avert danger of Communism is continuation of direct economic aid from US through FOA with its experience and organization. They also, situated as they are "under the gun" of joint menace of Viet Minh and Communist China, need American armament, budgetary aid for their defense effort which is beyond their capacity and has hitherto been funneled through France, and American military training.

France will also give budgetary support and France would like to monopolize training and reorganization of three National Armies. We should coordinate our economic aid and budgetary support with whatever programs France has, and we should also, certainly in case of Vietnam and Cambodia, at least share in military training mission. Our sharing in training is necessary both because on record we have better military method and because in case of Vietnam and Cambodia they will be reluctant to accept an exclusively French training mission because of their dislike of French, their fears of French intention to retain dominance in this area, and because of their disbelief in French military ability.

For long-range, there should doubtless be a multi-national cooperative economic organization devoted principally to industrialization of Asia in the larger sense. It would be well to start such an organization at present time. But it cannot and should not for next years to come replace direct US aid and control of such aid. It certainly should not replace our present FOA and MDAP programs in the immediately menaced countries of Indochina. But it could begin to study longer-term projects which must wait upon development of more stable political conditions. I would figure such an organization being devoted to Asia, not made worldwide. In first place, it would be less effective if it were too large an organization. Secondly, economic problems of over-populated, under-developed Asia and other continents are distinct.

HEATH

751G.5 MSP/8–354 : Telegram

The Chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in Indochina (O'Daniel) to the Department of the Army [1]

TOP SECRET SAIGON, August 3, 1954—noon.

MG 3000 A. During recent conversation with Ely as result discussion concerning US consideration withdraw B 26 and C 119 acft [2] he stated as follows:

"US evidently putting on our shoulders the loss of Tonkin. Don't forget the precedents of China and Korea. We were not responsible in those cases. All of us share responsibility for the situation here. I must say that I am profoundly displeased by all this. We still face the matter of the same battle for southern IndoChina. If the United States wants us to lose this too, tell us so and we will pull out. This is a common fight. It is not in France's interest to fight on here alone. We need US assistance as much as ever if we are to participate in defense of southeast Asia. We are putting in all the men. All we ask for is equipment. There need be no question that the Vietnamese will have full independence and their own army with divisions. In addition they will have French forces to help out. When the French forces are no longer needed they will be pulled out. The US may suggest whatever date it considers necessary for our departure and we will be glad to go. Our Asiatic policy is not French alone, it is western. I must tell you frankly it is not pleasant to have the impression that after our eight years of fighting the US feels we are letting things go here. The trouble goes back to China. We had no responsibility there. Neither were we responsible for the Chinese aid to the Viet Minh after the Korean armistice. We all share the responsibility for what has happened. I object to dumping all the blame on the shoulders of one nation."

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[1] This telegram was directed to the Department of the Army for General Ridgway, to be passed to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. However, a typed notation on the source text indicates that it was not relayed to State. It has not been determined when the message was actually received by the State Department.

[2] In telegram MG 2079 A from Saigon, July 30, General O'Daniel reported his discussion that day with General Ely concerning the possible withdrawal of U.S. aircraft on loan to the French in Indochina. In the same telegram, General O'Daniel recommended against the contemplated withdrawal. (751G.5 MSP/7–3054)

Comment: My reply to Ely was that I thought US had done good job in supporting French needs. The ceasefire was bound to give various impressions concerning the situation. Once things have settled down the problem will be sorted out and seen in its correct light. What has happened is a natural reaction. I get the impression that there is great concern at home over the weaknesses of the Diem govt. There is a feeling that the enemy through his propaganda strength and infiltration tactics will win the elections, get all our equipment and then take over all of southeast Asia. Furthermore there are 11 million people in the north against 9 or 10 million in the south. With a pistol in their backs there is no doubt as to how the vote will go in the north unless sound measures are used in the south. The enemy is conducting his political warfare in exactly the same manner as a shooting war, in accordance with the principles of war. The Vietnamese govt needs help in every dept if there is to be any hope for victory. Ely replied "what we must do is win the battle for peace. This is another type of political warfare. If we give up ahead of time there is no hope for success. You must continue to help us. We can't give up. We must win. I would have liked to have held the Tonkin. Two more divs would have been enough. I knew I could get two new divs from France but I still needed two US divs. However the US said no. This was an important element in our position. If I had had the certainty of two US divs, a different situation would have resulted. But that is passed now."

Comment: A little intestinal fortitude in French high command and in Paris would have helped.

INR–NIE files

National Intelligence Estimate

SECRET
NIE 63–5–54

WASHINGTON, 3 August 1954.

POST-GENEVA OUTLOOK IN INDOCHINA [1]

THE PROBLEM

To assess the probable outlook in Indochina in the light of the agreements reached at the Geneva conference.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The signing of the agreements at Geneva has accorded international recognition to Communist military and political power in Indochina and has given that power a defined geographic base.

2. We believe that the Communists will not give up their objective of securing control of all Indochina but will, without violating the armistice to the extent of launching an armed invasion to the south or west, pursue their objective by political, psychological, and paramilitary means.

3. We believe the Communists will consolidate control over North Vietnam with little difficulty. Present indications are that the Viet Minh will pursue a moderate political program, which together with its strong military posture, will be calculated to make that regime appeal to the nationalist feelings of the Vietnamese population generally. It is possible, however, that the Viet Minh may find it desirable or necessary to adopt a strongly repressive domestic program which would diminish its appeal in South Vietnam. In any event, from its new territorial base, the Viet Minh will intensify Communist activities throughout Indochina.

4. Although it is possible that the French and Vietnamese, even with firm support from the US and other powers, may be able to establish a strong regime in South Vietnam, we believe that the chances for this development are poor and, moreover, that the situation is more likely

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, this estimate was "Submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence. The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff.

"Concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 3 August 1954. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, the Joint Staff. The Director of Intelligence, AEC, and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction."

to continue to deteriorate progressively over the next year. It is even possible that, at some time during the next two years, the South Vietnam Government could be taken over by elements that would seek unification with the North even at the expense of Communist domination. If the scheduled national elections are held in July 1956, and if the Viet Minh does not prejudice its political prospects, the Viet Minh will almost certainly win.

5. The ability of the Laotian Government to retain control in Laos will depend upon developments in South Vietnam and upon the receipt of French military and other assistance. Even with such assistance, however, Laos will be faced by a growing Communist threat which might result in the overthrow of the present government through subversion or elections, and in any case would be greatly intensified if all Vietnam were to fall under Communist control.

6. We believe that if adequate outside assistance is made available, the Cambodian Government will probably increase its effectiveness and the effectiveness of its internal security forces and will be able to suppress Communist guerrilla activity and to counter Communist political activity. The situation in Cambodia would probably deteriorate, however, if a Communist government should emerge in Laos or South Vietnam.

DISCUSSION

I. *The Current Situation*

General

7. The signing of the agreements at Geneva has ended large-scale warfare in Indochina and has affirmed the independence of Laos and Cambodia. It has, on the other hand, accorded international recognition to Communist military and political power in Indochina and has given that power a defined geographic base. Finally, the agreements have dealt a blow to the prestige of the Western Powers and particularly of France.

North Vietnam

8. The Viet Minh has emerged from Geneva with international recognition and with greatly enhanced power and prestige in Indochina. The Viet Minh leaders, while admitting that their ultimate objectives may have been temporarily compromised "for the sake of peace," are acclaiming the agreements as denoting a major victory and ensuring the eventual reunification of all Vietnam under Communist aegis. Ho Chi-Minh is generally regarded as the man who liberated Tonkin from 70 years of French rule. The Viet Minh has initiated a program to absorb presently French-controlled areas in the Tonkin Delta.

South Vietnam

9. In South Vietnam, the agreements and the fact of the imposed partition have engendered an atmosphere of frustration and disillu-

sionment, which has been compounded by widespread uncertainty as to French and US intentions. The present political leadership appears to retain the passive support of the more important nationalist organizations and individuals. However, the government's already weak administrative base has been further dislocated, and it has only uncertain assurances of continued outside military and financial support. Mutual jealousies and a lack of a single policy continue to divide Vietnamese politicians. Moreover, certain pro-French elements are seeking the overthrow of the Diem government with the apparent support of French colonial interests anxious to retain their control.

10. The North Vietnam population is somewhat greater than the South Vietnam population and, in any event, the loss of the Tonkin Delta has deprived South Vietnam of the most energetic and nationalist segment of the population. Although South Vietnam has the capability for agricultural self-sufficiency, the principal and industrial establishments and fuel and mineral resources are located in North Vietnam.

11. Provided that the terms of the ceasefire agreement are observed, the combined French-Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam now have the capability of maintaining internal security.

Laos

12. The relatively stable internal situation in Laos, which in the past has depended upon French support, remains essentially unchanged. The Laotian Army is poorly armed and trained and, without the support of French forces and advisers, does not have the capability to maintain internal security. Moreover, "Pathet Lao" Communists continue to have *de facto* control of two northern provinces adjoining the Communist-controlled areas of Northern Vietnam. Furthermore, the Geneva agreements give members of the "Pathet Lao" movement freedom of political action throughout Laos.

Cambodia

13. The internal Cambodian situation, except for sharp political rivalries among leading Cambodians, is at present relatively stable. Non-Communist dissidence appears to have abated and the principal dissident leader, Son Ngoc Thanh, no longer poses any real threat to the government. The King retains widespread popular support for having obtained a large degree of effective independence from the French and for having safeguarded Cambodia's integrity at Geneva. Although the Communists are permitted freedom of political action in Cambodia, they have only a minimum appeal. The Cambodian forces, although somewhat weakened by the withdrawal of French forces, have the capability of dealing with current Communist subversive action.

II. *Outlook in Indochina*

General Considerations

14. The Geneva agreements, although precise and detailed concerning the time and place of troop redeployments and related matters, are imprecise about matters pertaining to future military aid and training. Moreover, the agreements are vague with respect to political matters. Details on the implementation of national elections are left for the interested parties to determine. Except for such influence as may be exerted by the presence of supervisory teams from India, Canada, and Poland, there is no provision for forcing the parties concerned to implement or adhere to the agreements.

15. The course of future developments will be determined less by the Geneva agreements than by the relative capabilities and actions of the Communist and non-Communist entities in Indochina, and of interested outside powers.

16. *Communist policy.* Communist willingness to reach agreement for an armistice in Indochina, at a time when prolongation of the conflict could have produced a steadily deteriorating situation in Indochina, was probably derived in substantial part from the Communist estimate that: (*a*) an effort to win a total military victory in Indochina might precipitate US military intervention, and (*b*) the objective of gaining political control over all Indochina could be achieved as a result of the armistice agreement. The Communists also apparently believed that an attitude of "reasonableness" and the acceptance of an armistice in Indochina would contribute to the realization of their objective to undermine western efforts to develop an effective military coalition. They probably consider, therefore, that a deliberate resumption of large-scale military operations from their zone in the north would negate the political and psychological advantages the Communists have gained by negotiating a settlement and could involve grave risk of expanded war.

17. In the light of these considerations, we believe that the broad outlines of Communist policy in Indochina will be to: (*a*) refrain from deliberately taking major military action to break the armistice agreement while seeking to gain every advantage in the implementation of the agreements; (*b*) consolidate the Communist political, military, and economic position in North Vietnam; (*c*) conduct intensive political warfare against non-Communist Indochinese governments and people; (*d*) work for the ultimate removal of all Western influence, particularly French and US, from Indochina; and (*e*) emphasize and exploit issues in Indochina which will create and intensify divisions among non-Communist countries. In sum, we believe that the

Communists will not give up their objective of securing control of all Indochina but will, without violating the armistice to the extent of launching an armed invasion to the south or west, pursue their objective by political, psychological, and paramilitary means.

18. *French policy.* It is impossible at this time to predict even the broad outlines of French policy in Indochina. The following appear to be the main alternatives:

a. Grant of complete political independence to the Indochina states, accompanied by an attempt to organize strong political regimes in those states. We believe that the French might be persuaded to adopt this policy by strong US–UK pressure, together with economic and military assistance to France and a guarantee of the defense of the free areas of Indochina against further Communist military attack.

b. Continuation of French Union ties with the non-Communist Indochinese states, with indirect French political controls and French economic domination. We believe that French policy may proceed along these lines if the French estimate that: (1) the Communists will follow a conciliatory policy in Indochina; (2) the non-Communist leadership will offer very little difficulty; and (3) the US and UK will not exert pressure toward a grant of full independence to the Indochinese states.

c. Some form of agreement with the Viet Minh providing for expediting elections and achieving a unification of Vietnam. The French might be inclined to follow this line if the Viet Minh held out promises of the maintenance of French economic and cultural interests, and of the continuance of some form of association of the unified Vietnamese state with France.

d. Withdrawal of all French military, administrative, and economic support from Indochina. We believe that this would occur only in the event of a hopeless deterioration of political, military, and economic conditions in the area.

19. *International policies.* The political survival of the Indochinese states is endangered not only by the threat of external Communist attack and internal Communist subversion, but also by their own inherent inexperience, immaturity, and weakness. We believe that without outside support the Indochinese states cannot become strong enough to withstand Communist pressures. The course of developments in Indochina will be largely influenced by the attitudes and policies of other powers. In general, we believe that in the absence of firm support from the US, the non-Communist states of Indochina cannot long remain non-Communist. If they are given opportunity, guidance, and material help in building national states, they may be able to attain viability. We believe that the energy and resourcefulness necessary for this achievement will not arise spontaneously among the non-Communist Indochinese but will have to be sponsored and nurtured from without.

Outlook in Vietnam

20. *Outlook in North Vietnam.* Communist activities in North Vietnam will be concentrated upon consolidation of Communist control, with their efforts in this respect probably appearing moderate at the outset. The Viet Minh will probably emphasize social and economic reforms and the participation of all political, economic, and religious groups in state activity. At the same time, Viet Minh cadres will establish themselves throughout the Delta, will begin the process of neutralizing all effective opposition groups, will undertake the usual Communist program of popular indoctrination, and will prepare for the election scheduled in July 1956. We believe the Communists will be able to achieve the consolidation of North Vietnam with little difficulty.

21. We believe that the Viet Minh will continue to develop their armed forces. Although the armistice provisions forbid the Viet Minh from increasing their supply of arms, we believe they will covertly strengthen and possibly expand their armed forces with Chinese Communist aid. Viet Minh forces will almost certainly continue to receive training in China.

22. Thus established firmly in North Vietnam, the Viet Minh regime will probably retain and may increase its symbolic attraction as the base of Vietnamese national independence. Its methods of consolidating control will probably continue for some time to be moderate, and, its internal program together with its military power, will be calculated to make the regime attractive to the remaining peoples of Indochina. It is possible, however, that the Viet Minh may find it desirable or necessary to adopt a strongly repressive domestic program which would prejudice its psychological appeal and political prospects. Barring such repressive Viet Minh policies, the unification issue will continue to be exploited to Communist advantage throughout Vietnam. Meanwhile, the Viet Minh regime will continue to strengthen the Communist underground apparatus in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, aware that significant Communist gains in any one of these countries will strengthen the Communist movement in the others. It will seek to develop strong overt Communist political groups where possible and will generally use all available means towards the eventual unification of the country under Communist control.

23. *Outlook in South Vietnam.* We believe that the Viet Minh will seek to retain sizeable military and political assets in South Vietnam. Although the agreements provide for the removal to the north of all Viet Minh forces, many of the regular and irregular Viet Minh soldiers now in the south are natives of the area, and large numbers

of them will probably cache their arms and remain in South Vietnam. In addition, Viet Minh administrative cadres have been in firm control of several large areas in central and south Vietnam for several years. These cadres will probably remain in place. French and Vietnamese efforts to deal with "stay-behind" military and administrative units and personnel will be greatly hampered by armistice provisions guaranteeing the security of pre-armistice dissidents from reprisals.

24. The severe problem of establishing and maintaining security in South Vietnam will probably be increased by certain provisions of the Geneva agreements which prohibit the import of arms and military equipment, except as replacements, and the introduction of additional foreign military personnel, the establishment of new military bases, and military alliances. These provisions limit the development of a Vietnamese national army to such numbers as may be equipped by stocks evacuated from Tonkin, plus stocks now held in Saigon. However, in the last analysis, Vietnamese security will be determined by the degree of French protection and assistance in the development of a national army, the energy with which the Vietnamese themselves attack the problem, and by the will of the non-Communist powers to provide South Vietnam with effective guarantees.

25. In addition to the activities of stay-behind military and administrative groups, the Viet Minh will make a major effort to discredit any South Vietnam administration, and to exacerbate French-Vietnamese relations, and appeal to the feeling for national unification which will almost certainly continue strong among the South Vietnamese population. The Communist goal will be to cause the collapse of any non-Communist efforts to stabilize the situation in South Vietnam, and thus to leave North Vietnam the only visible foundation on which to re-establish Vietnamese unity. French and anti-Communist Vietnamese efforts to counter the Viet Minh unity appeal and Communist subversive activities will be complicated at the outset by the strong resentment of Vietnamese nationalists over the partitioning of Vietnam and the abandoning of Tonkin to Communist control. It may be difficult to convince many Vietnamese troops, political leaders, and administrative personnel in Tonkin to go south, let alone to assist actively in the development of an effective administration in South Vietnam.

26. Developments in South Vietnam will also depend in large part on French courses of action. Prospects for stability in South Vietnam would be considerably enhanced if the French acted swiftly to insure Vietnam full independence and to encourage strong nationalist leadership. If this were done, anti-French nationalist activity might be lessened. With French military and economic assistance—backed by

US aid—the Vietnamese could proceed to develop gradually an effective security force, local government organization, and a long-range program for economic and social reform. Nevertheless, it will be very difficult for the French to furnish the degree of assistance which will be required without at the same time reviving anti-French feeling to the point of endangering the whole effort.

27. On the basis of the evidence we have at this early date, however, we believe that a favorable development of the situation in South Vietnam is unlikely. Unless Mendes-France is able to overcome the force of French traditional interests and emotions which have in the past governed the implementation of policy in Indochina, we do not believe there will be dramatic transformation in French policy necessary to win the active loyalty and support of the local population for a South Vietnam Government. At the present time, it appears more likely that the situation will deteriorate in South Vietnam and that the withdrawal from Tonkin will involve recriminations, distrust, and possibly violence. There will be delays in the development of effective administration in the south; the French military will probably be forced to retain a large measure of control for reasons of "security"; and efforts by French colonial interests to develop a puppet Cochin-China state will persist. It is even possible that at some point during the next two years the South Vietnam Government could be taken over by elements that would seek unification with the Viet Minh in the north even at the expense of Communist domination. Even if a stable government could be established, we estimate that the national elections scheduled for July 1956 would almost certainly give the Viet Minh control of South Vietnam.[2]

28. In the interim, Viet Minh propaganda will find ample opportunities to influence Vietnamese attitudes. Within a year, Viet Minh stay-behind units will probably be active politically, and possibly involved in open guerrilla fighting. In these circumstances, the French will probably be able to maintain their "presence" in South Vietnam through mid-1956, but their influence will probably become increasingly restricted to major cities and the perimeters of military installations and bases. The French might be willing to resolve this situation by an arrangement with the Communists which seemed to offer a chance of saving some remnant of the French economic and cultural position in Vietnam. Such an arrangement might include an agreement

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[2] In a notice to the recipients of NIE 63-5-54, Aug. 9, the last sentence of paragraph 27 was corrected to read as follows: "If the scheduled national elections are held in July 1956, and if the Viet Minh does not prejudice its political prospects, the Viet Minh will almost certainly win." The notice accompanies the source text.

to hold early elections, even with the virtual certainty of Viet Minh victory. Only if such an arrangement proved impossible, and the situation deteriorated to the point of hopelessness, would the French withdraw completely from the country.

Outlook in Laos

29. Providing the French maintain the 5,000 troops in Laos which the Geneva agreements permit them, and continue to develop the Laotian forces, the Royal Laotian Government should be able to improve its security forces and, excluding the two northern provinces, to deal with isolated, small-scale Communist guerrilla actions. Also, providing the Laotians continue to receive French and US technical and financial assistance, they probably will be able to maintain an adequate government administration. There is nothing in the Geneva agreements to prevent Laos from becoming a member of a defense arrangement so long as no foreign troops other than specified French personnel are based in Laos.

30. However, if the French for any reason decide not to maintain their troops nor to continue military training in Laos, it will be impossible for the non-Communist powers to provide effective aid to the Laotians without breaching the Geneva agreement. At the same time, Laos will be faced with a growing Communist threat, and the freedom of political action permitted members of the Pathet Lao movement, strengthened by support from the Viet Minh, may result in the overthrow of the present government through subversion or elections. Finally, further successes for the Viet Minh in Vietnam will have an immediate adverse effect on the situation in Laos.

Outlook in Cambodia

31. We believe that the Communists, in withdrawing organized units from Cambodia, will leave behind organizers, guerrilla leaders, and weapons. Initially, the Communists will probably minimize guerrilla action in order to concentrate on building their political potential in Cambodia.

32. Providing the withdrawal of the Communists is substantially in accord with the agreement, the development of stability in Cambodia during the next year or so will depend largely on two interrelated factors: (*a*) the ability of the Cambodians to develop effective government and internal security forces; and (*b*) the ability of the Cambodians to obtain external technical and financial assistance. There is no prohibition in the Geneva agreements against Cambodia's obtaining outside assistance to develop its defense forces or on joining a defensive alliance, providing the latter is in consonance with the

UN Charter and that no foreign troops are based in Cambodia in the absence of a threat to Cambodian security. If adequate outside assistance is made available, the Cambodians will probably increase the effectiveness both of their government and their internal security forces, and will be able to suppress Communist guerrilla activity and counter Communist political activity. The efforts of the Cambodians to strengthen their position would probably be more energetic if their independence were guaranteed by some regional defense arrangement. The situation in Cambodia would deteriorate gravely, however, if a Communist government should emerge in Laos or South Vietnam.

751G.5/8–354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

TOP SECRET   WASHINGTON, August 3, 1954—7 : 25 p. m.
PRIORITY

688. Eyes only Ambassador from Secretary. At various of his press conferences President has been asked to state authentic facts regarding possible U.S. belligerent action in Indochina. Many rumors have gained wide circulation which are seriously inaccurate and prejudicial. President stated he would make the true facts public as soon as it could be done consistently with the national interest. Leading members of Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees have also indicated their desire to have their Committees formally call on the President for such a statement.

In the light of the foregoing we have prepared, and the President has approved, a statement the essential parts of which are contained in next following cable.[2] We have prepared this on minimum basis so as to avoid risk of controversy with our allies or divulging what might be of advantage to hostile elements.

Unless you see some objection, please in confidence go over proposed statement with appropriate official of the Foreign Office so that they will know in advance what is planned to be said. Do not invite suggestions with reference to changes but if any are urged upon you, you may transmit them without however any commital as to their acceptance.

It may be necessary to issue statement before Congress adjourns, perhaps in a week or ten days.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State. Repeated to Paris as telegram 437.
[2] *Infra.*

751G.5/8–354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, August 3, 1954—7 : 26 p. m.
PRIORITY

689. Eyes only Ambassador from Secretary. Following is text of statement[2] mentioned in immediately preceding cable:[3]

"*French Requests Involving Possible United States Belligerency in Indochina*

The United States had made clear that it would take a grave view of open Chinese Communist aggression in Indochina.

[Here come quotes from Eisenhower's speech of April 16, 1953[4] and Dulles' speech of September 2, 1953.][5]

That latter statement had been made after prior discussion with the French Ambassador in Washington.

However, the foregoing statements, while they were intended to, and did in fact, deter open military aggression by Communist China in Indochina, did not fully meet the French preoccupations, as the situation developed in relation to Dien Bien Phu.

1. On March 23, 1953 [*1954*], General Ely, French Chief-of-Staff, called upon Secretary of State Dulles to express appreciation for the sympathetic reception which he had had in this country in discussing the military problems of Indochina. In the course of conversation, General Ely raised specifically the question of whether if MIGs from Communist China were to intervene in the battle of Dien Bien Phu, United States air power would in turn intervene to protect the French aircraft which were supplying Dien Bien Phu and which would be helpless against MIGs. The Secretary of State stated that he could not give at once a definitive answer to so serious a question. However, he pointed out that before the United States intervened as a belligerent, it would doubtless wish to take into account all relevant factors including the fact that such intervention could not be looked upon as an isolated act. Any such armed intervention would commit the prestige of the United States and would require it to follow through to a military success. This in turn involved political as well as military factors and called for a partnership understanding on the part of those concerned, which among other things should insure the patriotic participation of the local population and their effective military mobilization and training.[6]

General Ely's request was not pursued and there was not, in fact, any air intervention from Communist China.

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles. Repeated to Paris as telegram 438.

[2] Regarding the preparation of this statement, see memorandum by Secretary Dulles to the President, Aug. 2, p. 1898. For information on subsequent developments with respect to the statement, see memorandum by Secretary Dulles to the President, Aug. 24, p. 1976.

[3] *Supra.*

[4] See editorial note, p. 472.

[5] See editorial note, p. 747. Brackets in the source text.

[6] For the memorandum of the conversation of Mar. 23, see p. 1142.

2. During the night of April 4, 1954, at Paris, the French Prime Minister and French Minister of Foreign Affairs asked United States Ambassador Dillon to meet with them and they expressed to him their opinion that immediate armed intervention at Dien Bien Phu by United States carrier-based aircraft would be necessary to save that situation.

The United States Ambassador at once reported this opinion to the Department of State[7] and Secretary Dulles immediately replied through the United States Ambassador substantially as follows:

> 'As I personally explained to General Ely at a conference at which Admiral Radford was present, it would not be possible for the United States to become a belligerent in Indochina without a full political understanding with France and other countries. In addition it would be necessary that Congress should act. I have confirmed this position with the President. The Executive is prepared to consider united action in Indochina. However, such action is impossible except on a coalition basis which would include active participation of British Commonwealth countries, in view of their great stake in Malaya, Australia, and New Zealand.'[8]

3. On April 23, 1954, during the course of a NATO Ministerial Council meeting in Paris, attended by Secretary of State Dulles, the French Foreign Minister showed Secretary Dulles a military report from Indochina which stated that it might be necessary to seek a cease fire unless there were immediate and massive air support by the United States, which it was thought might still save Dien Bien Phu.[9]

The next day, April 24, Secretary Dulles, after consulting on military aspects with Admiral Radford, the United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who was then in Paris, advised the French Foreign Minister substantially as follows:

> 'We have considered this matter most carefully.
>
> 'The situation with regard to our participation is the same as when I spoke with you on April 14. Under the circumstances, we should first need Congressional authorization for any such war action. This cannot be obtained in a matter of hours, nor do I think it can be obtained at all unless it is within the framework of a political understanding which would include other nations directly and vitally interested in Southeast Asia.
>
> 'I may add that I have received military advice which indicates that at this stage even a massive air attack will not assure the lifting of the siege of Dien Bien Phu.'[10]

The foregoing are the three occasions when French officials suggested United States armed intervention in Indochina.

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[7] See telegram 3710 from Paris, Apr. 5, p. 1236.

[8] The quotation is from telegram 3482 to Paris, Apr. 5, p. 1242.

[9] See telegram Dulte 7 from Paris, Apr. 23, p. 1374.

[10] For the actual text of the message, see telegram Dulte 1 from Geneva, Apr. 24, p. 1398.

United States Parallel Efforts for 'United Action'

During this March–June 1954 period, the United States was seeking to develop the possibilities of collective action in the Southeast Asia area, on a basis which would fairly reflect the free world interests which were involved.

[Here come quotes from public speeches.] [11]

With the intensification of the Communist effort following the Berlin decision of February 18, 1954,[12] it seemed to the United States more than ever important to develop a united front as a counterweight to the probability of intensified effort of the Communist Vietminh, and increased material support to them from Communist China.

The following are steps by the United States in pursuance of this policy:

1. On March 23, 1954, Secretary Dulles met with the House Foreign Affairs Committee and discussed the desirability of publicly calling for united action in the Southeast Asia area. He invited and received suggestions from the Committee members in this respect. Thereupon, under the direction of the President, he drafted a statement on this subject which he then discussed with various Senators of both Parties. He then showed the proposed draft to the Ambassadors of certain other countries principally involved and learned that their governments, without commital, saw no objection to the proposed statement. The statement was then incorporated in a speech in New York on March 29. In that speech the Secretary of State reviewed the threatening situation in Indochina and noted the steps which the United States had taken to assist in the situation. He cited the President's view (April 16, 1953) that the Korean armistice would be a fraud if it merely released aggressive armies for attack elsewhere and recalled his statement (September 2, 1953) 'that if Red China sent its own army into Indochina that would result in grave consequences which might not be confined to Indochina.' The Secretary went on to say that

> 'Under the conditions of today the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally, by whatever means, would be a grave threat to the whole of the free community. The United States feels that that possibility should not be passively accepted, but should be met by united action. This might involve serious risks. But these risks are far less than those which will face us a few years from now, if we dare not be resolute today.' [13]

2. Upon his return from New York, the Secretary of State thereupon conferred further and on a broader basis with Ambassadors of countries which might be interested in 'united action' to save Southeast Asia from Communist domination.

3. On April 3, 1954, the Secretary of State and Admiral Radford met with a group of Congressional leaders to review the situation in Indochina and the possible course of United States action with respect to it. It was the sense of the meeting that the United States should

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[11] Brackets in the source text.

[12] For the pertinent portion of the final communiqué of the Berlin Conference, Feb. 18, see p. 1057.

[13] Regarding the Secretary's speech of Mar. 29, see the second editorial note, p. 1181.

not intervene alone but should attempt to secure the cooperation of other free nations concerned in Southeast Asia, and that if such cooperation could be assured, it was probable that the United States Congress would authorize United States participation in such 'united action.'[14]

4. On April 4, 1954, the President met during the evening at the White House with a group of his advisers,[15] following which communication was made by ⌊*to?*⌋ the Governments of the United Kingdom and of France inviting their prompt cooperation in organizing 'united action' in relation to Indochina and Southeast Asia. This led to invitations from the British and French Governments to Secretary of State Dulles to come personally to London and Paris respectively to discuss the matter.

5. Between April 4 to 9, 1954, the Secretary of State and other high State Department officers consulted in Washington with diplomatic representatives of Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Other Asian governments were kept informed.

The Governments of Thailand and of the Philippines promptly indicated their willingness to join in united action in Indochina and other Ambassadors indicated that they thought their governments would be sympathetic to the idea.

6. On April 10, 1954, Secretary of State Dulles left for London and Paris for direct personal discussions with the British and French Governments. On April 13, 1954, at London, after conferences with Mr. Anthony Eden, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and with Prime Minister Churchill, Secretary Dulles and Mr. Eden issued a joint statement which said:

> 'Accordingly, we are ready to take part, with the other countries principally concerned, in an examination of the possibility of establishing a collective defense within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, to assure the peace, security and freedom of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific.
>
> 'It is our hope that the Geneva Conference will lead to the restoration of peace in Indochina. We believe that the prospect of establishing a unity of defensive purpose throughout Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific will contribute to an honorable peace in Indochina.'[16]

7. On April 13 Secretary Dulles went to Paris and after discussions during that day and the next with the French President of the Council and with the French Foreign Minister, a joint statement was issued which said among other things:

> 'We recognize that the prolongation of the war in Indochina, which endangers the security of the countries immediately affected, also threatens the entire area of Southeast Asia and of the Western Pacific. In close association with other interested nations, we will examine the possibility of establishing, within the frame-

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[14] See memorandum for the file, p. 1224.

[15] See editorial note, p. 1236.

[16] Regarding the joint statement, see telegram Secto 2 from London, Apr. 13, p. 1321.

> work of the United Nations Charter, a collective defense to assure the peace, security and freedom of this area.'[17]

8. Following the return of Secretary of State Dulles to the United States, the Department of State, in pursuance of its understanding of the foregoing, proposed that the diplomatic representatives at Washington of France, Cambodia, Australia, Great Britain, Laos, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam call on him on April 20, 1954 to examine the possibility of establishing the collective defense within the framework of the United Nations Charter to secure the peace, security and freedom of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. However, the British Ambassador informed the Secretary of State that the British Government felt that it was premature to hold such a meeting.

9. Subsequently, the Government of the United Kingdom explained to the United States and to the House of Commons its view that no concrete steps should be taken to organize 'united action' until the outcome of the Geneva Conference in relation to Indochina were clearer.

10. On May 7, 1954, Dien Bien Phu fell to the Vietminh Communist attackers.

11. On May 8, 1954, the Geneva Conference held its first plenary session on Indochina.

12. At this point, the French Government indicated that it would like to discuss comprehensively with the United States Government the political and military conditions which would enable the United States to intervene militarily in Indochina. The French Government was thereupon promptly advised through the United States Ambassador in Paris (May 11, 1954) that the President would be disposed to ask Congress for authority to use the armed forces of the United States in the area to support friendly and recognized governments against aggression or armed subversion promoted from without, provided certain conditions were met.[18] The conditions then defined were subsequently summarized by Secretary Dulles in his June 11, 1954, address at Los Angeles as follows:

> '(1) an invitation from the present lawful authorities; (2) clear assurance of complete independence to Laos, Cambodia, and Viet-Nam; (3) evidence of concern by the United Nations; (4) a joining in the collective effort of some of the other nations of the area; and (5) assurance that France will not itself withdraw from the battle until it is won.'[19]

With reference to (5), the precise United States suggestion was that the French Government should not withdraw its forces during the period of the 'united action,' so that the forces from the United States—which it was then thought would be principally but not exclusively air and sea forces—and forces from other participating countries, would be supplementary to, and not in substitution for, the existing forces in the area.

13. On the basis of the foregoing, there occurred discussions at

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[17] For full text of the communiqué, see footnote 3, p. 1336.

[18] See telegram 4023 to Paris, May 11, p. 1534.

[19] Regarding the speech, see footnote 4, p. 1676.

Paris; as to which other interested governments were kept generally informed by the United States.

14. The possibility of 'united action' in the fighting in Indochina lapsed with the June 20, 1954, decision of the French Government to obtain a cease-fire in Indochina, a result which was arrived at by the Geneva Conference agreements of July 20–21, 1954." [20]

DULLES

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[20] See editorial note, p. 1859.

751G.00/8–454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, August 4, 1954—noon.

481. Repeated information Saigon 44. During weekend conversation with La Chambre, I had opportunity for full and frank discussion regarding his views of Diem government. La Chambre feels future Vietnamese Government must:

(1) Be fully representative of population in Southern Vietnam;
(2) Be prepared to initiate and carry out agricultural reform (redistribution of land) very promptly; and
(3) Be prepared to depose Bao Dai and create a republic when appropriate during coming months. He feels that Diem government does not qualify on any of these three points but also feels that Diem is valuable for his high moral character and should definitely be a member of any future Vietnamese Government if Diem should be successful in making his peace with the sects in the south and should obtain their support. La Chambre said there would be no objection to his staying on as Prime Minister, provided he would also act on points 2 and 3 above. La Chambre said his information was that Diem would not be able to obtain the cooperation and support of the populace of South Vietnam, and that, because of his Mandarin background, would oppose both agricultural reform and the deposition of Bao Dai. Therefore, La Chambre feels that a new government will be required if there is to be any chance of winning the coming election. La Chambre said that he favored Tam as the head of the new government and hoped that Diem would stay on as Minister of the Interior to control the police or as Minister of Defense. La Chambre also hopes that Buu Loc will join the new government as he would be helpful when the time came to depose Bao Dai.

Regarding timing, there apparently is nothing immediate in the air. La Chambre plans to spend September in Indochina and wants to look situation over there before any action is taken.

La Chambre feels Diem will be helpful during evacuation of the north and will help to get refugees to move to the south. My own guess is that there will be no change until November at the earliest. I also assume that if change is decided upon at that time it will be effectuated by Bao Dai. La Chambre said specifically that there could be no action on the deposition of Bao Dai until a broadly based government supported by all factions had been established in Southern Vietnam.

DILLON

Editorial Note

For text of NSC 5429, "Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East," August 4, 1954, a report to the National Security Council by the Planning Board, see volume XII. This report, which included a section on Indochina, was approved (as amended) by the Council at its 210th Meeting, August 12, 1954, as NSC 5429/1. For extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 210th Meeting of the NSC and other documentation relating to the NSC 5429 series, see *ibid.*

751G.00/8-554 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, August 5, 1954—8 p. m.

458. Repeated information Paris 165, priority Tokyo 9, Manila 58, Hanoi unnumbered. I returned yesterday from two days in Hanoi and Haiphong. I saw French and Vietnamese military and civilian authorities and visited refugee camps and reception centers. Briefly French have neither transportation facilities nor organization to live up to their promise to transport all Vietnamese who wish to take refuge in South Vietnam. Mass migration of several hundred thousand North Vietnamese who wish to escape communism will be failure unless US Government can bring planes and ships to Tonkin this month.

As it now stands French by air and sea hope to evacuate only 80,000 refugees during month of August. Meanwhile, according to Vietnamese figures which are probably roughly accurate, there are in Hanoi, Haiduong, and Haiphong a counted total of some 120,000 refugees from outside those cities and more are still coming in. This figure does not take into account inhabitants of those cities who will wish to leave. It is yet impossible to estimate what will be eventual total number of refugees. Vietnamese refugee organization estimates there will be at least 700,000. Whether it will fall short of that number or exceed it depends on several factors, one of most important of which is whether rapid transportation can be provided in these next days to come. If it is learned that refugees can leave Hanoi and Haiphong promptly, more refugees will get to these cities. Meanwhile, Viet Minh is employing very effective propaganda, terrorism, and measures to prevent departure of these refugees, all of course in violation of Geneva agreements.

Ngo Dinh Diem last night and Foreign Minister in note handed to me today [1] have asked that US provide transportation if possible to bring up schedule of evacuation to 160,000 by 15 August.

General Allard and Salan's Chief of Staff will return from north tonight with figures as to number of planes and vessels which they ask US to furnish. General O'Daniel is sending a group tomorrow north for quick study of requirements. Pending Allard's report Departments of Navy and Air, and CINCPAC and CINCFE, should be urgently informed of this situation.

It is our considered judgment here that this vitally important mass movement of non-Communist population from North Vietnam will be a failure with political and psychological repercussions that may well be disastrous unless US steps boldly and strongly forward and deals with problem. In view of inexperience and incompetence of Vietnamese authorities and daily demonstrated confusion, lack of adequate planning and incorrigibly weak staff work on part of French, US is only source for leadership, planning, direction and facilities to carry out this vital operation. If large part of refugees are not moved in remainder of this month, success of this whole venture will be gravely imperiled.[2]

I believe that President should be informed of this situation.

HEATH

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[1] The note has not been found in Department of State files.

[2] In telegram 478 from Saigon, Aug. 6, Ambassador Heath reported that French authorities had "urgently and formally requested US assistance in providing surface transportation for refugees from Haiphong to Saigon." The French estimated that shipping for up to 100,000 persons would be required. (751G.00/8–654)

Editorial Note

On August 5, 1954, Harold E. Stassen, Director of the Foreign Operations Administration, announced that measures were being taken to assist refugees in Indochina. For a summary of Stassen's delineation of the aid being provided, see Department of State *Bulletin*, August 23, 1954, pages 265–266.

The role of the United States in the evacuation and resettlement of refugees from North Vietnam is described in a report published at Saigon in October 1954 by the Foreign Operations Administration Mission to Vietnam. For the text of this report, titled "Exodus: Report on a Voluntary Mass Flight to Freedom, Viet-Nam, 1954," see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 7, 1955, pages 222–229.

751G.00/8-654 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 6, 1954—3 p. m.

460. Repeated information Paris 167, Hanoi unnumbered. I paid my first call yesterday on Tran Van Do, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

1. He said that one of his first duties had to do with internal rather than foreign affairs. He was negotiating for President with Cao Daists, Hoa Haos, and Binh Xuyen, and he thought he would succeed in obtaining their allegiance to Ngo Dinh Diem's Government. He said it involved some compromise of nationalist principles to work with three sects but it was urgently necessary if order were to be established in south Vietnam.[1]

2. He was very anxious to have an American military training mission here and hoped the international supervisory commission would not consider it a violation of armistice if additional American training personnel were furnished. He was dubious about India's stand, however, on this and other matters affecting armistice. He said he had had two talks with Krishna Menon and on both occasions Menon had asked him to have national elections within six months after cease-fire. He said he had patiently explained to Menon that under present disordered conditions, Communist terrorism and infiltration, this meant victory for Communist. But Menon had brushed that off by saying, after all Viet Minh were Vietnamese and they should be able to live and work together. To which Do replied that Vietnamese Communist was no longer Vietnamese, but Menon seemed unconvinced. Do remarked that he found Menon remarkably ill-informed.

3. Do said he thoroughly realized that until Vietnamese Army could be reorganized it was necessary for French Expeditionary Force to remain here. On other hand, as long as French were here in visible military force, it was very difficult for nationalist government to enlist support of people and make them believe that Vietnam was really independent. He said that at soonest possible date he wanted, by arrangement with French, get out schedule of progressive withdrawal of French Forces. Even if it took a matter of two or three years, he had to have some documents to show people that French were going to get out.

HEATH

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[1] On Aug. 7, Ambassador Heath and the Foreign Minister discussed the question of the sects in more detail. Heath summarized the conversation in telegram 491 from Saigon, Aug. 7. (751G.00/8-754)

251G.51G22/8–754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy at Saigon [1]

SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, August 7, 1954—12:45 p. m.

491. Joint State–Defense–CIA–FOA–USIA message. Above agencies form special OCB group designed assist all addressees in rapid decisions required in adjustments existing programs and redeployment resources in respect Indochina.[2] Priority given refugee movement and resettlement. Among other matters group will be concerned with evacuation mil equipment to areas to be designated by US, provision mil and other assistance to retained Vietnam and other AS designed to strengthen position vis-à-vis VM and Commie China. Essential that country team Saigon submit as soon as practicable and in as precise detail as possible recommended program for most effective use of US economic financial and mil aid with indication of controls necessary to most expeditious and efficient implementation.

Embassy Saigon instructed prepare note to Vietnamese Govt in answer their request Saigon's 458 repeated Paris 165 Tokyo 9 Manila 58 Hanoi unnumbered [3] offering US assistance in removal from areas north of 17th parallel of Vietnamese and their resettlement in retained portion. Outline suggested text follows:

Usual opening "US Govt desires extend Govt Vietnam all reasonable assistance to evacuate from areas defined in cease-fire agreement its nationals who understandably unwilling face grim certainties life under commies. Well aware that mere removal does not solve problem for such people, or for Govt Vietnam, US Govt also prepared provide as far as possible material help needed to enable refugees from VM domination to resume existence under their chosen Govt with maximum opportunity add strength that Govt through own efforts.

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[1] Drafted by Robert McClintock of FE (formerly Counselor of Embassy at Saigon). On Aug. 11, McClintock was designated chairman of a special interdepartmental working group on Indochina. On Aug. 18 he was named Ambassador to Cambodia. This telegram was repeated to Manila as 479, to Tokyo for CINCFE, to Paris as 486, to Hanoi (via Saigon) as 162, to Phnom Penh as 17, and to Vientiane as 11. It was also transmitted to the Navy Department for CINCPAC.

[2] In a memorandum of Aug. 3 to Under Secretary of State Smith, Chairman of the Operations Coordinating Board, Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President, suggested that the OCB establish a special working group on Indochina. (OCB files, lot 62 D 430, "SEA #2") At its meeting of Aug. 4, the OCB agreed upon the establishment of such a group under the chairmanship of the Department of State. It was intended that the group deal with day-to-day developments in Indochina, particularly in regard to necessary readjustments in U.S. programs in light of the termination of hostilities. The OCB instructed the working group to prepare immediately an offer of U.S. assistance to be presented in Saigon to the Vietnamese Government regarding the evacuation and resettlement of refugees from the north. (OCB files, lot 62 D 430, "Minutes")

[3] Dated Aug. 5, p. 1921.

"Embassy will continue close cooperation Vietnamese Govt to ensure that US assistance is made effective in meeting the needs of the Govt and its people. US will expect maximum cooperation of Govt Vietnam in working to this mutual end." [4] Usual closing.

In accompanying oral comment Amb will of course note that US now dealing direct with local Govt, though Fr Govt in view their continuing interest and involvement have been given advance info this note. Our aid primarily for benefit Vietnamese, though recognize that we cannot categorically exclude Fr in view impossibility knowing all future circumstances. Emb Saigon requested telegraph final text with time delivery to permit simultaneous release here. State will inform AS missions. Embassy Paris: Inform Foreign Office substance of note.

Defense communicating with CINCPAC, info to Chief, MAAG, Saigon, and CINCFE re lift requirements.

Emb Saigon and Chief MAAG/Indochina will recognize political undesirability receipt Fr request for assistance on behalf Vietnamese refugees as distinguished from possible utilization US facilities by Fr if necessary. Both instructed therefore forestall such request if it appears imminent.

DULLES

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[4] In Press Release No. 431 of Aug. 8, the Department of State announced that the United States had delivered this message to the Government of Vietnam. The published version was identical in substance to the draft appearing here. For text of Press Release No. 431, see Department of State *Bulletin*, Aug. 16, 1954, p. 241.

751G.00/8-854 : Telegram

The Chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in Indochina (O'Daniel) to the Department of the Army [1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, August 8, 1954.

MG 3024 A. Info SecDef, SecState, JCS, CINCPAC, AmEmbassy Saigon. Have prepared study here our point of view US part future Vietnam including estimate situation and concept operation in substance following:

Mission: Establish political psychological, military, economic courses action for adoption by US to insure Free Vietnam survival as nation. Develop Vietnam as effective barrier continued Communist expansion as nation.

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[1] This Army message was transmitted through State Department channels.

Concept operation depends fulfilling following primary conditions: Financial material and personnel support by US as required; successful execution this program and open cooperation French Government; Vietnamese acceptance US assistance; and active support US program within Free Vietnam means.

With indispensable support defined above, concept embraces US advisors and operation agencies assist Free Vietnam all echelons and in all functional activities. Generally every key Free Vietnam official and government agency will along side one or more US specialists for steering in discharge responsibilities, all with French concurrence.

NSC establish national policies, et cetera, US Embassy Saigon implementing agency through country team. US Embassy Saigon, GHQ under command for Ambassador for direction activities required under this plan. Following tasks be accomplished:

a. Political, psychological. US to use its own interpretation of the French Vietnam cease-fire agreement to provide all possible freedom relations with Vietnam. US must undertake major political psychological action re France, SE Asia and Vietnam. By agreements US assume dominant role cooperation with France and Vietnam to develop strong viable Vietnam. By US political psychological actions re SE Asia produce strong positive support from nations having primary interest SE Asia. Develop strong democratic state oriented toward West. By persuading Government Vietnam to announce complete independence, and for French to announce date of withdrawal French forces and date Vietnam becomes entirely free. Detailed implementation above included in plan.

b. Military establish sound realistic modern system national military service. Specialists from US selective service employed this effort. Evaluate and establish sound personnel policies. Establish national intelligence agency and other intelligence programs all fields. Study and reorganize Defense Ministry and Armed Forces. Establish for each military service streamlined and highly effective training organization to include staff training and field training agencies, develop division training camps, RTC, et cetera. Logistics development. Signal development. Budget and fiscal development. Develop independent Vietnam army of divisional-sized units.

c. Naval and air establish sound economic program to provide for realistic development resources including rebuilding railroads, developing highway system, agrarian reforms, housing construction, schools, development sanitation and hygiene.

We believe such plan last resort solution on salvaging remaining Vietnam and offer it for consideration in formulation US policy for SE Asia. Ambassador concurs. Ambassador generally concurs with objectives above outline and with my analysis situation. He approves entire report as a timely, useful initial plan, although he has reservation as to some of methods proposed, as he doubts necessity of US to become quite so far involved in operation of this government except on military training side. *Comment:* I feel this is war in every sense. Wartime methods, therefore, are in order all fields until emergency passed.

751G.00/8–954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, August 9, 1954—7 p. m.

558. Eyes only Secretary. New information which has just come to my attention makes me feel that it is imperative to obtain concurrence or acquiescence of Schumann and Bidault prior to publication of statement on Indochina. When Joyce showed proposed statement [1] to Margerie, Margerie commented that the record seemed to be accurate as far as it went but that it omitted all mention of your offer of atomic bombs to Bidault. He said you had made this offer to Bidault during a private conversation which took place during an intermission of one of the formal talks at the Quai d'Orsay, which were held during your visit here en route to Geneva.

Joyce asked Margerie if this "offer" was not perhaps merely a speculation as to whether atomic bombs could be useful at Dien Bien Phu. Margerie said "No". He further said that Bidault told him and La Tournelle about your offer immediately after he finished talking with you and that Bidault had the distinct impression that you were suggesting the use of atomic bombs which were to be given by the US to the French. According to Margerie Bidault was much upset about this offer and felt that the use of atomic bombs would have done no good tactically and would have lost all support for the west throughout Asia. Our judgment is that Margerie fears that if Bidault should feel that publication of the statement as drafted placed him in unfavorable light and indicated that he favored continuation of the fighting and was not doing his best to obtain a settlement, he might respond by publicizing his version of the conversation regarding atom bombs and might attempt to take credit for having prevented their use after it had been suggested by US.[2] I would hope to avoid any such eventuality by prior clearance of statement with Schumann and Bidault.

I do not believe that Bidault would resort to any such irresponsible tactic which would damage interests of free world and prestige of US but we must nevertheless bear in mind that he is ill, nervous, hypersensitive and bitter.

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[1] For text, see telegram 689 to London, Aug. 3, p. 1915.

[2] For Bidault's subsequent recollection of an offer by Dulles of two atomic bombs, purportedly made at Paris in April 1954, see Georges Bidault, *Resistance: The Political Autobiography of Georges Bidault* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1967), p. 196.

DILLON

751G.00/8–954 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, August 9, 1954—7:31 p. m.
PRIORITY

501. Eyes only Ambassador from Secretary. Am totally mystified by your 558.[2] Have no recollection whatever of alleged offer, our notes of conversation do not reflect mention of subject, and it is incredible that I should have made offer since the law categorically forbids it as was indeed well known not only to me but to Bidault because it had been discussed at NATO meetings.

I recall that at the restricted NATO meeting on 23 April 1954 I made a statement on U.S. policy concerning use of atomic weapons, in the course of which among other things I said "Such weapons must now be treated as in fact having become conventional." I am wondering whether what Bidault reported was not in fact what I had said at the restricted NATO Council meeting.[3]

See no objection to your showing statement confidentially to Schumann but we must not get maneuvered into a position where the President and I cannot respond to a Congressional request unless this is also approved by foreign governments.

Under the parliamentary system, both British and French Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers are subjected to interrogations by Parliament and make answers to questions. What we propose here is our counterpart of that system. We naturally want to act with courtesy and consideration and avoid public controversy but we must not give others veto power over our relations with Congress and the public.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by the Secretary of State.
[2] *Supra.*
[3] For documentation on the Secretary's statement, see volume v.

751G.00/8–1054 : Telegram

The Chargé at Vientiane (Rives) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, August 10, 1954—noon.

9. Sent Saigon 20, Department 9, Paris 8, Bangkok 3, Phnom Penh unnumbered. As result conversations various Franco-Lao military

including Colonel De Crevecoeur, I submit present military picture Laos with anxieties expressed regarding future and with few immediate plans.

1. Cease-fire effective August 6 and quiet reigns Laos. Joint Franco-Lao-Viet Minh commission due meet August 7 Khangkhay village on Plaine des Jarres met only yesterday as result delay arrival Viet Minh from Hanoi via military plane. Latter group includes officers which will contact Viet Minh units Laos.

2. Colonel De Crevecoeur stated Viet Minh began breaking off contact and moving toward frontiers as much as week before cease-fire date. He believes this due fact certain units hard hit and tired and their desire leave without controls specified Geneva agreement. Latter desire thought based enemy plans leave weapons behind with Lao dissidents or hidden in secret depots. Further purpose early movement enemy obviously based plans carry out maximum propaganda campaign during withdrawal. This especially evident south Laos where three regular Viet Minh battalions have broken contact Pakso-Saravane region and are moving toward Annam in company groups via different routes, thereby passing through large number villages. Since Franco-Lao forces no longer allowed move and mixed commission has designated no assembly areas or routes evacuation yet, Viet Minh still free do as they please.

3. First difficulties joint commission (from Franco-Lao point of view) three-fold according De Crevecoeur. Primary one is certainty Viet Minh will again try separate Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces from Laos by direct or indirect means.

Also sees trouble re future of Vietnamese from Laos who fought with so-called Pathet Lao but not citizens Laos. Feel Viet Minh will try have them recognized as Laotians and regroupable with Pathet Lao (according De Crevecoeur this would immediately increase estimated 2,000 Pathet Lao strength to at least 6,000).

Third worry of French is fact joint commission in five mobile groups touring country. Unless closely controlled this to present excellent propaganda opportunity Viet Minh elements these parties.

4. One of principal tasks not only of commission members but for future is regain and retain control Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces. Franco-Lao forces not permitted move forces in during 120 days, but in each area some 2,000 Franco-Lao guerrillas and parachute commandos led by about ten French officers each province. These men now ordered group openly scattered points both provinces as regular Lao forces led by members French training mission. These groups then to attempt pro-Lao Government propaganda work while at same time trying keep Pathet Lao forces scattered, leaderless (Vietnamese

have been leaders in past) and unable receive aid from North Vietnam or China.

Neither French nor Laotians believe number of Pathet Lao desirous move regrouping zones in north will be large. Well-known dislike Laotians leave village areas expected result in most requesting remain home districts (danger, however, exists that some may simply go underground and organize for "banditry"). Therefore number Pathet Lao hoped be small if Vietnamese can be weeded out. Franco-Lao side will urge on International Commission that Vietnamese claiming Lao nationality (no Vietnamese able hold it legally) be grouped special area in north and be forced produce proof nationality or be expelled with other Viet Minh.

With regard corridor for Pathet Lao movement between Phong Saly and Sam Neua provinces, Franco-Lao authorities determined allow no loitering or establishment camps and hope this too may keep Pathet Lao from organizing effectively.

5. All French forces Laos including training mission total approximately 9,000 of which some 4,000 will depart by end 120 days (November 19). This will leave 1,500 in training mission and 3,500 at two French bases located Seno and either Paksane or Vientiane. I had announced Paksane as definite for second base but De Crevecoeur states he trying for Vientiane because of airfield which French must ban and because town on direct route from Bangkok to north in event war reopens and other troops move up. Objection is political undesirability have French troops located Lao capital.

6. For defense Laos De Crevecoeur (future status unknown but will probably lead training mission) plans on light defenses in north, slightly stronger on line Luang Prabang–Plaine des Jarres, with main forces near areas Vientiane and Seno from which rapid movement by plane possible.

7. Lao National Army already equipped mainly with US material but with few spare parts or replacements. Only ammunition appears be in large supply.

Though French troops which leave are to take their equipment, I believe most heavy equipment to be left Laos.

Lao forces waiting see how much equipment destined for them now in Saigon. Meanwhile, figures re defense matériel needed by Laos being prepared for presentation International Commission with permission import requested.

8. Matter of extreme importance is spread all possible propaganda counter past and present Viet Minh efforts. To this end orders gone out all guerrilla as well as regular Franco-Lao units that stress be placed immediately fact that Viet Minh are withdrawing and there-

fore Laos victorious in struggle. I feel this vital in order combat enemy words they will be back, and shall urge Lao Government have civil officials circulate about country since ban on movement only affects military.

Thus far, French military appear be supplying main ideas and drive effort save Laos. I trust, however, Lao Government aware need for action and will move shortly. Unfortunate delays and confusion caused by late return officials from Geneva, mounting of commissions, and need plan and despatch group for Paris economic talks which of more immediate anxiety Lao Government even than Viet Minh.

RIVES

751G.00/8–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 10, 1954—2 p. m.

507. Repeated information Paris 181, Hanoi unnumbered. General Ely tells me he will probably leave Wednesday evening, August 11, for Paris.

He said he is willing to stay on in Saigon if in Paris he learns that Mendes-France Government will pursue loyal, clear policy vis-à-vis remaining Vietnam. If not, he will ask to be relieved.

His idea of policy to be pursued is to write off North Vietnam, at least for a long time to come, and to write off possibility of there being "free" national elections in 1956. There must be no "flirtation" with Viet Minh. Independence of retained Vietnam must be absolute. He hopes that international pact can be arranged to guarantee security of remaining Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and that there will be international military consultation and cooperation to that end in which he would have role to play.

He very definitely indicated that he would like French to retain completely training mission for Cambodian army and of course Laotian army. With regard to training Vietnamese army, he would greatly welcome American participation and has directed General Gazounaud, who heads French training mission, to consult with General O'Daniel. He states that if there is possibility that US will transform MAAG into training mission, he would advise against negotiations therefor on governmental level. He said that should Washington decide to participate in training, O'Daniel should be so informed, and he and O'Daniel would work it out here on ground quickly. If negotiations were on governmental level there would be delay and complications. He felt sure that if conditions were agreed to in principle here, French Government would accept them.

HEATH

751G.00/8–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 10, 1954—2 p. m.

517. Repeated information Paris 187, Hanoi unnumbered. When I passed through Washington month ago, I said I felt no certainty that Ngo Dinh Diem would be able to organize strong government of national appeal. His performance after month in office makes me more uncertain still. While we all recognize his integrity and sincerity as an asset, majority of nationalists in Saigon doubt that he has political sagacity or executive ability to form or conduct a government of national unity. As reported in mytel 491,[1] Foreign Minister Tran Van Do is busying himself trying to rally sects and certain other elements to support of government. Do told me this morning that he hoped he would be able to persuade Cao Daists, Hoa Haos and Binh Xuyen to support and participate in new government. He said that yesterday he had told Ngo Dinh Diem that while evacuation of refugees was of urgent importance, he must delegate this responsibility and devote himself to effecting union of diverse factions and making an effective appeal to masses. To latter end it was necessary have Cao Daists and Hoa Haos, since they were in real contact with peasant masses who could not be reached through newspapers or propaganda literature. Do told Diem that no government could be formed without support of three sects at present and he would simply have to make some compromise with his principles of supremacy of National Government and his objections to government subsidy of these religious but greedy warlords with their private armies and tax collections. Furthermore, he had overcome Diem's objections to bringing in Tran Van Tuyen as chief of information service. He said to me that Tuyen, although by no means reliable, was one man who could make something of information service. I am inclined to agree with this latter judgment.

It is to be hoped that Do will succeed in forming for Diem a strong government of national unity but he has not many days in which to accomplish this task. Such a government would have more popular appeal than government under any other of aspirants now busily intriguing and combining to oust Diem.

So far General Ely has not given any encouragement to groups planning Diem's ouster, but he told me today that he did not believe Diem's government would be long-lived because of Diem's rigidity and incapacity. He nevertheless believed that any government would need Diem's reputation and integrity to have national appeal. He doubted, however, that Diem would ever consent to take a subordinate position. I argued very strongly with Ely that there should be no encouragement of any ouster movement at least until it had been shown that Do would be unable to rally sects and form a strong governmental team. We will have to watch French pretty carefully since they are not unnaturally exasperated by unconcealed France-Phobia of Diem team and latter's lack of any appreciation for necessity French assistance in evacuating Tonkin refugees.

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[1] See footnote 1, p. 1923.

HEATH

751G.00/8-1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, August 10, 1954—7 p. m.

576. Eyes only Secretary. At my direction, Joyce saw Margerie today and conveyed to him substance of first two paragraphs of Deptel 501.[1] He also told Margerie that he felt it was obvious that there had been a complete misunderstanding by Bidault, possibly based on language difficulties.

Margerie said that he fully agreed that there must have been such a misunderstanding. He added that he remembered April 23 very well because on that day Bidault had been ill, jittery, overwrought, and at his very worst. Margerie added that on that day Bidault had been "incoherent" to members of his own top staff. Therefore, he very readily understood how such a misunderstanding could have come about on that particular day.

Margerie said that he was very grateful that this subject had been cleared up and hoped that knowledge of this misunderstanding would be kept strictly limited. He said that he would undertake to see Bidault personally and straighten him out on this subject.

I remember Bidault's condition on that day very well myself and I am sure that it is the complete explanation for his otherwise incomprehensible misunderstanding.

I hope to be able to show statement to Schumann tomorrow. I will emphasize to him that this is being done merely as a courtesy.

In view of tense parliamentary situation here, I thoroughly agree with Parodi and Margerie that publication of statement should be postponed until after EDC debate.[2]

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[1] Dated Aug. 9, p. 1928.

DILLON

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[2] Regarding the disposition of the question of the statement, see memorandum by Secretary Dulles to the President, Aug. 24, p. 1976.

751G.00/8–1054

Memorandum by the Acting Special Assistant for Intelligence (Howe) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] August 10, 1954.

Subject: Intelligence Note: The Present Situation in South Vietnam

The situation in South Vietnam is characterized by widespread disillusionment over the terms of the Geneva agreements, a dangerous vacuum of political leadership, and uncertainty with respect to French and other Western intentions. There is general realization throughout South Vietnam of the preponderant strength, both military and political, of the Viet Minh regime, and of the determination of that regime to achieve control of all Vietnam.

The Military Situation

For the moment at least, French and Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam now have the capability of maintaining internal security. If French Union forces from the north are evacuated to South Vietnam, this capability would be increased. It should be noted, however, that superiority in forces and fire-power provides no guarantee of security. If, as anticipated, the Viet Minh engages in intensive political warfare in South Vietnam, including the use of irregulars in paramilitary activities, the present Franco–Vietnamese capability to maintain internal security could rapidly disappear.

The Political Situation

The partition, which has awarded 14 of Vietnam's 25 million people to the Communists, has sapped whatever political vitality South Vietnam may have had. Prime Minister Diem's government appears temporarily to retain the passive support of his more important nationalist constituents. However, intrigue and opportunism continue to divide Vietnamese politicians and present indications are that certain Cochinchinese elements, allegedly with French support, are seeking the overthrow of Diem's government. Viet Minh political activities aimed at discrediting the non-Communist nationalists are already openly in evidence in both urban and rural areas in South Vietnam. The sentiment for "unification", even at the expense of Communist domination, appears to be growing.

A similar memorandum has been sent to the Under Secretary.

Fisher Howe

751G.00/8–1254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET Paris, August 12, 1954—noon.

598. Rptd info Saigon 59. We saw first LaChambre and later Cheysson yesterday with Bonsal. Cheysson has just returned from special five day mission Saigon. Both reported that ineffectiveness of Ngo Dinh Diem regime has exceeded worst fears. LaChambre quoted last report from Ely to effect that incapacity of govt is exceeded only by its self-conceit (fauite). Cheysson termed Diem govt most hopelessly ineffective of all Vietnamese govts to date. No decisions were being made and no action taken in pressing problems including evacuation of non-Communist populations from north. French were obliged, LaChambre stated, to take matters in own hands in order to get anything done as in case evacuation from north. This is bad politically but they cannot do otherwise in face do-nothingness of govt. They report that original estimate that million refugees would have to be moved from north has now been scaled down to 200,000 including 70,000 Vietnam Army officers and families. Vietnamese National Army in north is disintegrating so rapidly that unlikely more than one-third of original force will remain under arms when Haiphong is evacuated. Soldiers were fortunately deserting without arms.

While we were with LaChambre unexpected news of Bao Dai's statement that he was returning to Indochina in near future was received. LaChambre termed it "coup de theatre" totally unexpected in Paris although Cheysson reports rumor attributed to Queen Mother had circulated in Indochina. All evidence points to fact that decision is Bao Dai's own. LaChambre commented that although he deplored Bao Dai and would welcome opportunity get rid of him in view present uselessness Diem govt return not likely worsen situation. Furthermore if it represents decision by Bao Dai take active part in govt and administration national affairs it might actually prove useful. On other hand Cheysson feared that return would further Vietminh objectives in that opposition to Bao Dai is so marked his very presence would drive people to Vietminh. Moreover he termed Bao Dai and Tran Van

Huu two Vietnamese most capable making deal with Vietminh. Evident from LaChambre's reaction that French will do nothing to prevent return although Cheysson expressed wish there were some means do so.

LaChambre reported that Ely would arrive in Paris tomorrow night for stay 4–5 days to report to govt and obtain new instructions. General Allard is in Paris at moment working with War Ministry on needs for Expeditionary Corps in South Vietnam.

LaChambre raised question treatment Vietminh zone by U.S. with regard to control of trade and COCOM lists. What were U.S. intentions in matter? Did they intend treat territory on same basis China, barring trade in same products now excluded from China? We stated we were without instructions but that subject would undoubtedly be dealt with in near future.

In recounting ineffectiveness Diem and possible successor govts LaChambre inclined think govt headed by former PriMin Tam as most favorable possibility. He recounted efforts which Vietminh had already begun to attract support in South Vietnam by persuasion and fear. He referred to practice of leaving local party agent in villages evacuated by Vietminh and of terrorizing peasants by presenting them with pictures of Ho and Bao Dai and telling them they must make their choice. He believed that only means counteracting Vietminh tactics was to solicit aid and support of sects in fighting fire with fire. If this proved necessary Tam might be best equipped man to carry out job.

We also discussed question Sainteny's mission to North Vietnam. LaChambre explained that he had been named "Delegate of French Govt" in order avoid any indication that he was official diplomatic or consular emissary of govt to Vietminh. French had acted quickly on Sainteny's appointment in order to avoid any reciprocal step by Vietminh. Sainteny chosen both because he is well known to and trusted by Vietminh and because he is known to be "firm". Moreover chosen because he is in no sense a career officer either in foreign or colonial service and therefore could not be considered an official representative of France either to a "foreign" or even "colonial" power.

Finally we touched on question our maintaining future representation in Vietminh zone which will be subject of immediately following telegram.[1]

DILLON

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[1] Telegram 599 from Paris, Aug. 12, reported that the Embassy recommended that the Consulate at Hanoi remain open until such time as pressure from the Viet Minh necessitated its closing. (125.456/8–1254)

751G.00/8–1254

Memorandum by Robert McClintock to the Under Secretary of State (Smith)[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON, August 12, 1954.]

Subject: A U.S. Policy for Post-Armistice Indochina

I. *Problem*

To develop and carry out U.S. policy toward Indochina following the Geneva cease-fire agreements which will preserve the integrity and independence of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in order that they may form a barrier to further Communist encroachment in Southeast Asia.

II. *Discussion*

Following the military defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the acts of diplomatic salvage accomplished at Geneva there exist in the Indochinese peninsula two and one-half countries with varying degrees of independence. These are Cambodia, which is independent in every aspect except its juridical relationship to the French Union and its currency and customs community with the other Associated States, Laos which is independent within the framework of the French Union but closely bound by contractual arrangements with France, and Vietnam, which by the terms of the cease-fire agreement is now divided roughly along the 17th parallel between a Viet Minh North and a Free Vietnam in the south.

In Cambodia the people are homogeneous, loyal to the royal house, eager to undertake military service, relatively well off from an economic aspect since Cambodia is an export area, and preserved to some extent from the virus of communism by the moral precepts of the Buddhist religion. In Laos the population is sparsely settled over an immense area of territory and is apathetic as to political developments. The Laotians, however, are loyal to the King and Crown Prince and likewise have the moral basis of Buddhism as at least exerting a negative influence against communist penetration. Tabs B and C set out in more detail the position at Cambodia and Vietnam [*Laos*] and trace the outlines of recommended U.S. policy.

In Free Vietnam there is political chaos. The Government of Prime Minister Diem has only one virtue—honesty—and is bereft of any practical experience in public administration. The Vietnamese National Army has disintegrated as a fighting force. Cochin-China is the seat of three rival private armies and the security services of Free Vietnam have, by decree of Bao Dai, been handed over to a gangster sect, the Binh Xuyen, whose revenues are derived from gambling, prostitution and extortion. Tab A provides more extensive description of the situation in Vietnam, and suggests such antidotes as can be applied.

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[1] This memorandum was transmitted via Assistant Secretary of State Robertson. It is accompanied in the files by 3 tabs totalling 18 pages which are not being printed. McClintock, former Counselor of Embassy in Saigon, was Chairman of the OCB Special Working Group on Indochina. He was named Ambassador to Cambodia on Aug. 18.

It must not be forgotten that Vietminh elements throughout Vietnam are working with hot haste to take over the entire country by cold war means before national elections are held two years hence. The Communists likewise hold an enclave in Laos from which to direct the intended envelopment at that Kingdom.

III. *Recommendations*

1. The U.S. should furnish direct, adequate economic, financial and military assistance to the three countries of Indochina. However, this assistance should be conditioned upon performance by the three countries in instituting needed reforms and carrying them out if necessary with U.S. or other assistance. The corollary to the policy of direct aid is the requirement to renegotiate with France the existing instruments which now channel U.S. aid for Indochina, both military and financial, exclusively through French hands.

2. The three Indochinese states should receive guarantees of their territorial and political integrity from an eventual Southeast Asia collective defense system. Initially, however, the three countries should not adhere to the formal collective defense treaty but should benefit by its provisions as does Western Germany under the NATO pact. Cambodia, Laos and Free Vietnam should be informed by the signatories of the new defense treaty that their integrity is guaranteed by that treaty.

751G.5/8–1254

The Secretary of Defense (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

SECRET WASHINGTON, August 12, 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: The Chief of MAAG, Indochina, has recommended that the United States assume responsibility for the training of the Vietnamese Army. As you know, representatives of the Governments of all three Associated States have, in their contacts with United States officials in Indochina, asked for United States assistance in training the indigenous forces of those States.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered this question and have recommended that, before the United States undertakes the training of forces of any of the Associated States, certain preconditions essential to the success of such an effort be met. As stated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, these preconditions include:[1]

> "From the military point of view it is absolutely essential that there be a reasonably strong, stable civil government in control. It is hopeless to expect a U.S. military training mission to achieve success unless the nation concerned is able effectively to perform those governmental functions essential to the successful raising and maintenance of armed forces, to include the provision of adequate facilities, drafting and processing of personnel, pay of troops, etc. Unless the foregoing conditions prevail, a U.S. training mission would lack the authority and governmental support essential to the successful accomplishment of its mission.
>
> "The government of each of the Associated States concerned should formally request that the United States assume responsibility for training their forces and providing the military equipment, financial assistance, and political advice necessary to insure internal stability.
>
> "Arrangements should be made with the French granting full independence to the Associated States and providing for the phased, orderly withdrawal of French forces, French officials, and French advisors from Indochina in order to provide motivation and a sound basis for the establishment of national armed forces. The United States from the beginning should insist on dealing directly with the governments of the respective Associated States, completely independent of French participation or control.
>
> "The size and composition of the forces of each of the Associated States should be dictated by the local military requirements and the over-all U.S. interests."

I am in general agreement with the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff which represent the current Department of Defense position on this subject.

A point additional to those made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff is that international interpretation of the cease-fire agreement may in any event impose limitations on the extent of military training, as well as end-item assistance, that could be undertaken by the United States in Indochina.

Sincerely yours, C. E. Wilson

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[1] The document quoted here is a memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, dated Aug. 4, 1954; for full text, see *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, Book 10, pp. 701-702.

751G.00/8-1354: Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 13, 1954—11 a. m.

565. Repeated information Paris 193. Limited distribution. Reference Paris telegram sent Saigon 35 repeated Department 420.[1] Jacques

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[1] See footnote 3, p. 1898.

Raphael-Leygues called on me this morning. He said he was an old friend of Diem on whom he had called first. Last evening he had met various Vietnamese acquaintances including a representative of Binh Xuyen.

He said it was very evident from his contacts that a Junta was being formed to overthrow shortly Ngo Dinh Diem, with actual deposition of government effected by Binh Xuyen who control Security Police. Leygues said it was urgent for French Commissariat General and US Embassy to make clear to Hoa Haos and Cao Daists, but especially Binh Xuyen, that neither France nor US would recognize government proceeding from forcible overthrow of Diem government and that all aid would be refused to such a regime.

He said that, while Diem was neither a good politician nor an executive, he must be retained at head of, or at least in, any government because of his merited reputation for honesty and purity of ideals. Solution was for Diem to surround himself with stronger Cabinet and, immediately necessary, he would have to come to some terms with the sects. He urged me to warn Diem of danger confronting him and his government.

Among individuals engaged in promotion of this Junta, he named Tran Van An.

Leygues believes that Prince Buu Hoi, who is accompanying him on his mission, separately, arriving tomorow, will be able to give good advice to Diem, as well as to latter's opponents. He said he did not know whether it would be practicable nor did he know whether Buu Hoi desired to take part in Diem's government. He describes Buu Hoi as fiercely anti-Communist and now hated by Viet Minh, although in 1946 and for a time after when Viet Minh were more nationalist he was Ho Chi Minh's "Cultural Counselor" in Paris.

At time we spoke we had not received news that Bao Dai had announced his early return to Vietnam. Leygues volunteered it would be disastrous for Bao Dai to return at this time. He said he would urge French Government to persuade Bao Dai to remain absent for time being, if indeed latter had any idea of returning.

Comment: Leygues' news of formation of Junta to overthrow Diem government is, of course, what we have been reporting for some time (cf. Embtels 447, 489, 517).[2] I do intend to warn Diem in stronger terms than I have used with him heretofore that he must hasten his negotiations with the sects and appoint a better government team with larger representation of south, which is only important region now left to Vietnam. I have already advised Cao Daists through General

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[2] For telegram 517 from Saigon, Aug. 10, see p. 1932. Telegram 447, Aug. 4, and telegram 489, Aug. 7, are not printed. (751.0151G/8–454; 751G.00/8–754)

Phuong (cf. Embtels 348 and 370)[3] that any action or agitation against Diem government at this time would have a very bad reaction in US and abroad. I said same thing to Thuan, who a few months ago Bao Dai planned to appoint governor of south, when he came to inquire whether US was "supporting" Diem.

HEATH

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[3] Regarding telegram 348 from Saigon, July 28, see footnote 3, p. 1890. For telegram 370, July 29, see *ibid.*

611.51G/8–1354

Memorandum of Conversation, by Robert McClintock

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 13, 1954.

Subject: Views of the Chuong Family on Current US-Vietnamese Relations

Participants: The Vietnamese Ambassador and Madame Tran Van Chuong
Mr. Robert McClintock, FE

I lunched alone today with the Ambassador and Madame Tran Van Chuong. As the Ambassador accurately observed, Madame Tran Van Chuong should have been Ambassador rather than he. She is a highly alert, intelligent and aggressive lady who in addition to being a counselor of the French Union is likewise a first cousin of Bao Dai. Her hatred of the French, despite the fact she accepted the title of counselor, is extreme. It was clearly evident that Madame Tran Van Chuong as the sharper member of the team is being sent to Saigon tomorrow to scout the ground, build bridges and return with intelligence for her husband who is on balance the most balanced member of the pair.

Tran Van Chuong and his wife indicated that as original inhabitants of Hanoi his house had been immediately confiscated by the Ho Chi Minh Government in 1945. They had lived for a year in clandestine opposition to the Ho Chi Minh regime. Following the massacre of December 19, 1946, they escaped to the country behind the Vietminh lines but eventually found their way back to Hanoi after it had been recovered by the French. Chuong was Foreign Minister of Bao Dai in 1945 and claims to have authored the note to General De Gaulle demanding complete independence from the French.[1]

After Bao Dai's departure in exile the Chuongs claim they were placed under house arrest for two years between 1947 and 1949. They were first kept in exile at the Hong Gai coal mines but later were allowed to live in house arrest at Dalat. This explains some of the fixed hatred which animates both the Chuongs for the French despite the fact that Madame Chuong has been honored by the French Government and her husband has spent many years in exile in France.

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[1] For a translation of the letter of Aug. 18, 1945, from Bao Dai to General De Gaulle, then President of the Provisional French Government, see Cameron, *Viet-Nam Crisis*, vol. I, pp. 48–49.

Chuong claims that he was consulted by Bao Dai prior to the formation of the Diem Government. He said that Bao Dai complained that he had no recourse but to follow the French line unless he could be assured of U.S. support. In Chuong's words he said that he told his Majesty that by following the French line the Vietnamese had already lost half their country and he would rather lose the other half than die of shame by continuing the French connection.

Both the Chuongs were emphatic in their insistence that Bao Dai was the only solution for Viet Nam. They added, however, that Diem must be given a full run for his money and deprecated the French intrigues now going on in Saigon and Paris against Diem. It will be recalled that Diem's brother, Nhu, is married to the Chuongs' daughter and that they are very close to Diem.

Since it was apparent that both the Ambassador and his vigorous wife are wholly on the Bao Dai line while at the same time committed to a single policy of extracting the utmost direct aid from the U.S., I thought it useful to intimate that not everyone in this country shared their enthusiasm for Bao Dai. I said that from my own observation it seemed that his Majesty had followed a policy of divide and rule at a time when Viet Nam needed unifying and I likewise noticed the something less than benign influence on his Majesty of Nyugen De, who is the father incidentally of Miss Elizabeth De, First Secretary of the Vietnamese Embassy. Madame Chuong asked on several occasions if I thought Bao Dai should go back to Viet Nam or remain in France. I said that I was not privileged to offer an opinion on this point but I did feel very strongly that Bao Dai's full powers for Diem should be continued irrespective of where his Majesty took up residence.

611.51G/8–1854

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Hensel) to the Under Secretary of State (Smith)

SECRET WASHINGTON, August 13, 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: In accordance with the informal request of the Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were requested to consider the draft message to Prime Minister Mendes-France regarding United States policy toward Indochina. The views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been received and a copy is attached. These views are consistent with their views regarding United States assumption of training responsibilities in Indochina which were forwarded to you with the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense on 11 [*12*] August.[1]

This Department fully concurs in the attached views and recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, except that it will not be necessary for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review the proposed message after it has been amended to reflect the recommendations in paragraph 5 of their comments.

Sincerely yours, H. STRUVE HENSEL

[Attachment]

Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] 12 August 1954.

Subject: Message to the French Prime Minister

1. This memorandum is in response to the memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), dated 11 August 1954, which requested the comments and recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with respect to a Department of State draft of a proposed message to the Prime Minister of France regarding United States policy toward Indochina.[2]

2. In their memorandum to you dated 4 August 1954, subject: "U.S. Assumption of Training Responsibilities In Indochina",[3] the Joint Chiefs of Staff set forth certain conditions which they considered should be met before the United States assumes responsibility for training the forces of the Associated States. Particularly pertinent to the consideration of the proposed message are two preconditions which, in substance, prescribed:

a. The existence of a reasonably strong, stable government capable of performing those functions essential to the successful raising and maintenance of its armed forces; and

b. The granting by France of full independence to the Associated States and arrangements for the eventual phased withdrawal of French forces, officials and advisers from Indochina, in order to provide motivation and a sound basis for the establishment of national armed forces.

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[1] See letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State, Aug. 12, p. 1938.

[2] The ISA memorandum and the draft telegram attached to it are not printed. (JCS files) For the text of the telegram as transmitted, see telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, p. 1957.

[3] The subject memorandum is quoted in the letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State, Aug. 12, p. 1938.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that neither of the above conditions can be said to exist now. The tenure of the present government in Vietnam appears to be in doubt and subject to final determination by the French as to the eventual composition of that government. Until this matter has been definitely resolved, the strength and stability of the Vietnam Government will hardly be such as to hold promise of providing the firm direction required for the raising and maintenance of armed forces. Unless a reasonably stable government is established, the United States training mission would lack authority and governmental support essential to the successful accomplishment of its mission.

4. While the French Government has announced its intention to grant independence to the Associated States, it has not announced a plan for the scheduled relinquishment of French authority or for the withdrawal of French officials from Indochina affairs. The residual responsibility and authority, if any, to be retained by the French Government, particularly with respect to the control to be exercised over the armed forces of the Associated States, has not yet been made clear. If, in fact, the French were to retain a degree of authority and direction in the organization and training of the indigenous forces, the United States training mission would be prevented from discharging its responsibilities completely independent of French participation and control.

5. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that the proposed message is not an unqualified commitment to furnish military aid or to provide training assistance to the Associated States. They are in accord with the stated purpose of the message, to reassure both the French and Associated States Governments of the United States intention to assist in preventing an eventual Communist take-over in Indochina. However, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that the proposed message should state in clearer terms that the final United States decision as to the extent of military aid and the assumption of responsibility for training will be contingent upon the establishment of the prerequisite conditions discussed in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 above. As presently worded, the proposed message might convey to the French that U.S. decisions with respect to these matters have already been taken, without definite French commitments as to their intentions. Further, the Joint Chiefs of Staff feel that the message should be more specific with regard to the United States desire that its representatives deal directly with the Governments of the Associated States and that all United States military material aid should eventually be given directly to the Associated States rather than through the French Government.

6. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the substance of the foregoing views be transmitted to the Department of State with the request that they be adequately reflected in any message to the Government of France, at this time, regarding the furnishing of military aid to the Associated States or to the assumption of training responsibilities by the United States in Indochina, and that the Joint Chiefs of Staff be given an opportunity to review the amended message.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
M. B. RIDGWAY
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

751G.00/8-1454 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 14, 1954—2 p. m.

580. Repeated information Paris 198, Hanoi unnumbered.

1. I saw Ngo Dinh Diem this morning and told him I was somewhat alarmed by Junta of the three southern sects and others which had as its obvious aim ouster of his government. Diem said it was one of his troubles and worries but expressed confidence he could handle this problem. Tran Van Do and other Ministers had been in negotiation with sects and today members of his Cabinet would meet with leaders of latter. Sects had wanted representation in his government but their idea of representation was to have key portfolios of Interior, Foreign Commerce, and Defense, and no government could function in this time of national peril with sects operating those vital posts. They were neither competent nor honest. Cao Daist Pope had asked for a license for export of rubber and permission to transfer large sum to France. He said he had granted certain favors of that type but one had to stop some time. Basic offer he would make sects would be to give them each, say, ten seats in a National Assembly, which would be given power over budget, enjoy free debate and right to "interpellate" government.

It would be an appointive assembly at outset but truly representative of country. Catholics would also be represented as sect in assembly and presumably receive ten seats same as Cao Daists, Hoa Haos, and Binh Xuyen. Remaining 20 or 30 members of Assembly would be taken from elected members of municipal councils of south and center Vietnam. Three non-Catholic sects would therefore have important bloc of seats but not a majority. He hoped form this assembly in next month or two.

2. I said I was somewhat preoccupied by Bao Dai's announcement

that he would return shortly to Vietnam.[1] Diem replied he was also preoccupied over this occurrence and had wired Bao Dai urging him not to come for several weeks yet. He could not, however, prevent Bao Dai returning if latter insisted on it. There were two reasons for Bao Dai's proposed return. One was criticism in French, particularly Socialist, press over his remaining in France while his country was in difficulties. Other reason was that his advisers, such as Giao, who had enjoyed authority and financial profits from Bao Dai regime, were afraid they were going to lose their revenue and places and were accordingly urging him to return so that they could get on payroll again. He said it was useless to think of Bao Dai giving any real "performance" since he was a very sick man. He rejected idea that Bao Dai's influence over sects might persuade latter to abandon their financial and power ambitions and get behind a true movement of national unity. Bao Dai had occasionally kept sects in line but almost always by passing out money or export licenses or monetary transfer permits. His return at this time would only complicate work of an overworked government. He would have to take time off to consult with Bao Dai, make reports, and send extra copies, et cetera of all decisions. Bao Dai, he said, had always operated on principle of "divide to rule". He would not be a unifying influence.

3. Diem admitted his governmental team was far from perfect. There were some good men but some who were not up to job. Some men whom he would like to take into government had refused to enter and he was in no position forcibly to draft them. He was trying to get back certain men who were now abroad.

Nevertheless, in spite of his difficulties he was gratified with performance of his government to date. It had won first round in preventing Viet Minh from overrunning certain provinces and cities in center and south. (*Comment:* I find this a somewhat hopeful assessment of efficacy of his government against Viet Minh penetration.) He had prevented organization of Viet Minh manifestations, although his police and Vietnam armed forces were woefully inadequate in many centers. Their partial success against Viet Minh was due, he felt, in considerable measure to confidence of people and functionaries in him and in his administration. This confidence was more gratifying since Viet Minh were resorting to terrorism and threats against officials, even Ministers of his Cabinet. He was building up something of a team spirit. For example, one of his innovations was to keep "open table" for all members of Cabinet. Meeting at meals they worked out many a problem and kept up team spirit. However, his grocery bill for first month had risen to 80,000 piasters, which was practically his official income. I suggested that would be a legitimate budgetary expense.

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[1] In telegram 581 from Saigon, Aug. 14, Ambassador Heath reported that the prestige of Bao Dai in Vietnam was zero and that only trouble could arise from his return. Heath urged that the United States exert its influence to prevent the return of the Chief of State. (751G.00/8–1454) The Embassy in France expressed its concurrence with these views in telegram 684 from Paris of Aug. 18, and reported that efforts would continue to persuade French officials to keep Bao Dai in France. (751G.00/8–1854) In telegram 603 to Paris, Aug. 18 (repeated to Saigon as 626), the Department agreed that the return of Bao Dai would worsen the situation there. (751G.00/8–1454)

He said that French press was criticizing his administration. French should be grateful because he had prevented anti-French demonstrations which would have dangerously increased anti-French feeling. Desire to manifest against French was nationwide after evacuation of loyal provinces in delta followed by Geneva accords which split country.

4. Returning to difficulty of getting competent men on government team, Diem said he knew a great many competent Vietnamese he could not use because of their incorrigible tendency to graft. I told him that while I thought Secretary for Economic Affairs Thoai [2] was doing a good job in organizing refugee evacuation, his team was not large enough for task. I inquired whether he had given thought to temporarily putting men like Nghiem Van Tri, former Defense Minister, and Le Quang Huy, former Public Works Minister, on team. He said Tri was much better talker than effective organizer. Furthermore, he always insisted on feathering his own financial nest. Huy was an amiable, nice person but too easy going. He had not enjoyed respect of Public Works Department and no one in that Department had ever really worked at his job. I inquired as to effect of arrival of Prince Buu Hoi in Vietnam. Diem said Prince was really anti-Viet Minh, although he had been accused of having soft spot for them because of previous connections. He was even more anti-Bao Dai although a member of Royal family. Prince had asked him for money to start up a leprosy research institute and he would try to find funds for him but he did not intend to add him to his governmental team. He said Prince's private life cost great deal of money and he was not qualified to be a member of an austerity regime. He doubted that his visit would have much political effect.

5. I told Diem I had been somewhat shocked that two leading Vietnamese bankers, Le Van Vy and Le Quang Gong, had come out for fixed parity of exchange of Viet Minh and Vietnamese piasters. I remarked we would have to reconsider our whole aid program if that were done because it would mean that Vietnamese economy, our aid, and French aid would be subsidizing Viet Minh section of country. If there were to be an exchange it should be on free market basis. Diem

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[2] Nguyen Van Thoai.

said to have no worry that he would not consent to such an arrangement. Vy, although banker, he said, was Viet Minh sympathizer refusing to believe it was Communist movement.

Diem seemed full of determination and optimism.

HEATH

751G.00/8–1554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, August 15, 1954—7 p. m.

646. Repeated information Saigon 68, Hanoi 7. Limit distribution. Sainteny today told Bonsal he is leaving for Hanoi August 18 accompanied by Roland Sadoun. Sainteny states decision his mission result Viet Minh request at Geneva. He does not anticipate Viet Minh request for reciprocal mission Paris. His functions will, following October 11, be that of French Government representative to a government not recognized by France. He does not as yet have clear idea of just what he can achieve. He believes in trade between North and South Vietnam, notably in rice and coal. He hopes to find helpful elements among non-Communist Viet Minh although recognize they will be fewer and less influential than at time his earlier stay in Hanoi (1945–47). He anticipates French cultural establishments in Hanoi will remain open with present teaching staff.

Sainteny welcomes report he has received of US decision to leave consulate open if possible. "This will be great help to me".

Sainteny has no views on conditions in South Vietnam. He thinks well of Diem.

Bonsal also saw Ely this afternoon. Latter had just seen Mendes-France and had told latter that he, Ely, not disposed to continue in present job if French policy, as reflecting Sainteny appointment, was to play double game in IC, i.e., to be prepared through Sainteny establish full relations Viet Minh if that appears winning card. Ely states Mendes gave him most categoric assurances that policy of French Government is to give maximum possible support to anti-Communist elements in retained Vietnam and to do everything possible contribute success these elements in pre-electoral period. Ely stated he delighted to hear this, and particularly at fact Mendes has authorized him to make known policy of French Government at appropriate moment following Ely's return to Vietnam (in about a week). Ely continues worried and perplexed at developing political situation in Vietnam including incapacity of Diem government and threat of *coup d'état* by religious sects and Hinh. Ely states he and Daridan are in agreement that return of Bao Dai at this time highly undesirable.

Ely expressed in warmest terms appreciation Ambassador Heath's constant cooperation and understanding.

DILLON

751G.00/8-1654

Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Bonsal) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 16, 1954.

Subject: General Ely's views on the political situation in Vietnam.

Supplementing the Paris Embassy's reporting on the subject, here is a summary of various points which General Ely made at a luncheon which I attended with him and Minister LaChambre at the latter's house on August 14:

1. Ely is most disappointed with the Diem regime and is concerned over developing political situation. He indicated that the fact that General Hinh has now reached some sort of understanding with religious sects in the south makes a military *coup d'état* quite possible. Ely believes such a *coup d'état* would be a serious mistake and would greatly diminish the chance of building a stable regime in South Vietnam with adequate popular support. On the other hand Ely does not feel that he can intervene to prevent such a *coup d'état* since such action by the French would undermine the confidence of the Nationalists in French promises to respect Vietnamese internal independence. Both Ely and LaChambre consider Tam best available man to replace Diem or to enter into a coalition government if Diem is retained. He would have the support of religious sects and would presumably control Hinh. The possibility of finding a way of developing a new governmental formula through some sort of representative assembly based on existing bodies, i.e., without elections appeals to both Ely and LaChambre.

2. Ely stated that it is of the utmost urgency that a Southeast Asian defense pact be set up so that the people in South Vietnam will gain confidence that Vietminh overt aggression in South Vietnam would bring pact into play. He stated that of course even this pact would not minimize the growing danger that Vietminh would take advantage of unsettled conditions and lack of leadership in South Vietnam to seize power through more or less peaceful means.

3. Ely stated that Vietminh treatment of French Union prisoners had been cruel and horrible beyond belief. He stated the view that a number of returned prisoners would be way below expectation in view

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[1] Copies of this memorandum were transmitted to McClintock in FE, Ambassador Heath in Saigon, and First Secretary Gibson in Paris.

of the number who had died in captivity. He said, however, that it was important to avoid any publicity on this aspect until all available prisoners had been returned.

4. Ely stated that at least half of the Vietnamese national army of the north would have deserted by the end of the current month. He added that the Vietminh is making tremendous efforts through pressures on families of these men and otherwise to induce them to desert and that these efforts are being by and large successful.

5. Ely stated that the neutral commission personnel will include some 2,000 Hindus whose arrival Ely views with some concern because of the consistently pro-Vietminh attitude of the Indian Government.

6. Major purpose of Ely's trip to Paris is to endeavor to obtain governmental policy decisions on various pending matters. One of these is the relationship between North and South Vietnam and notably on the economic policy to be followed with reference to trade between the two sections of the country. Should the south continue to help feed the north? (Sainteny's reply is highly affirmative on this point.)

7. On the military situation previous to the cease fire, Ely stated that while he could have repelled an attack on Hanoi he no longer had enough sure troops both to defend Hanoi and to guarantee the Hanoi–Haiphong supply line.

751G.00/8–1654

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 16, 1954.

Participants: The Acting Secretary
G—Mr. Murphy
EUR—Mr. Merchant
Ambassador Henri Bonnet
Mr. Gontran de Juniac, French Minister

At the conclusion of a call on another subject the French Ambassador raised with the Acting Secretary the question of the position of the French cultural and commercial organizations in North Vietnam. He said that the French Government had decided to keep these institutions (such as the French-operated coal mines, the French hospital and probably the French high school in Hanoi) in operation notwithstanding the risk to which the French citizens employed would be subjected. The purpose was to avoid leaving the field in the Delta to the Vietminh and to attempt to keep hope alive in the North pending the elections in 1956. Consequently, the French Government hoped that these individuals and organizations would not be placed on any embargo or black list by the United States Government.

The Acting Secretary replied that this was a difficult and involved subject which he would be happy to discuss with the Ambassador at another time. He also pointed out that it was essential that we reach an understanding with the French on a number of matters—political as well as economic—relating to Vietnam and the other two Associated States. He said we intended to do all in our power to preserve this area in freedom but that in order for us to proceed it was essential that the United States have a clear understanding of what French intentions and plans were. The Ambassador indicated that he was at the Acting Secretary's disposal at any time for such a talk.[1]

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[1] A memorandum of conversation by Tyler of WE indicates that Ambassador Bonnet and Secretary Dulles considered this subject in an inconclusive manner during a meeting of Aug. 18 which was devoted to various subjects of common concern. (611.51/8–1854)

251G.51G22/8–1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 17, 1954—5 p. m.

613. Repeated information Paris 212, Manila 74, Tokyo 13, Hanoi 65. Department pass Defense. Meeting of Vietnamese, French and American officials working on refugee evacuation problem held yesterday at MAAG Saigon, disclosed extremely gloomy picture.[1]

Although refugees pouring in by airlift and by French ships and first increment of 2,000 on board US Navy craft, expected arrive Saigon August 19 or 20, building has started on only one out of five refugee camps in Saigon area and this camp has only thirty tents so far erected. Reception center planned for Cap St. Jacques still in blueprint stage. Nevertheless, yesterday being official holiday, no work was done. Chief Naval Section MAAG explained at meeting that starting middle next week, American ships will be arriving daily with a build-up shortly to reach desired average of 100,000 refugees per month. Attempt made pin down responsibility for details of embarkation in north and debarkation and transport to reception center in south. This reveals planning for matters such as local transportation, feeding, medical facilities, et cetera, woefully inadequate.

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[1] Documentation on the problem of the evacuation of refugees which was transmitted to Washington by the Embassy at Saigon included the following despatches: No. 73, Aug. 17, enclosing a note from the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Aug. 10 expressing appreciation for the American offer of assistance (251G.51G22/8–1754); No. 75, Aug. 19, transmitting minutes of country team meetings on the refugee problem on Aug. 10 and 14, and a memorandum on the background of the situation (251G.51G22/8–1954); and No. 76, Aug. 20, enclosing the minutes of the country team meeting of Aug. 20 (251G.51G22/8–2054).

Ho Quan Phuoc, now responsible for Vietnamese side refugee program who has been on job only three days, explained frankly his situation—he has so far staff of only three persons, he unable control or requisition civilian labor, he apprehensive civilian drivers would steal trucks, he without any means rapid communication with Vietnamese authorities in north. He must have assistance Vietnamese National Army as only a military organization can hope make program success. He states he has talked to Chief of Staff General Hinh but Embassy representatives believe meeting of minds not yet fully achieved by any means. It notable Vietnamese Army not represented at meeting in spite of vital interest. Nevertheless one Vietnamese Army battalion has been despatched Cap St. Jacques for labor and security work and one battalion made available for Saigon area. With regard French Army, close cooperation still does not exist. French do not move until specifically requested. This results in over-all lack leadership which US representatives attempting overcome through urging increased cooperation and tripartite organization where practicable.

French Army Major protested implication French not cooperating and appealed to US representatives not to attempt hurry refugee transportation even though ships available. He emphasized grave dangers involved in arrival swarms of refugees in south where preparations receive them non-existent. He added French are giving first priority to evacuation Vietnamese troops and their families.

Richard R. Brown, STEM refugee expert with broad European and Near East Asian background, states conditions in north worse than anything he has ever experienced, including Germany at end war. No Vietnamese willing take responsibility for camps and French giving number one priority to French soldiers, dependents and equipment, paying little attention to refugees. Camps are without sanitation, refugees not registered, and medical staffs have quit not having been paid. Brown states there are 132,000 refugees in desperate circumstances waiting to be moved. Situation could not have been better planned by Viet Minh themselves for Communist propaganda purposes.

Above is deeply depressing, but General O'Daniel, MAAG chief, Saigon, remains optimistic and with STEM is doing everything humanly possible put US expertise at [omission] Vietnamese in attempt solve their problem. General believes his representatives at Haiphong may be able establish better coordination in north and states that US Navy will be able assist resolve serious problem breakdown of communications system between north and south.

HEATH

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President"

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 17, 1954.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT

. . . .

I discussed with the President our program for switching aid in Indochina directly to the Governments of the three Associated States rather than via France. The President agreed.[1]

. . . .

I expressed my concern with reference to the projected SEA Treaty on the ground that it involved committing the prestige of the United States in an area where we had little control and where the situation was by no means promising. On the other hand, I said that failure to go ahead would mark a total abandonment of the area without a struggle. I thought that to make the treaty include the area of Cambodia, Laos and Southern Vietnam was the lesser of two evils, but would involve a real risk of results which would hurt the prestige of the United States in this area. The President agreed that we should go ahead.[2]

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[1] See telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, p. 1957.

[2] For additional documentation on this question, see volume XII.

751G.00/8–1854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, August 18, 1954—11 p. m.

[Received 8:04 a. m.]

668. Repeated information Saigon 70. Informed yesterday by Brohon, military advisor to LaChambre, that to date Viet Minh have released only 6300 prisoners of 30,000 French list as missing. Of 30,000 French group 13,000 under category "dead, missing, deserted, etc." and 17,000 as "known certainly to have been taken prisoner alive".

Of 23,700 still unaccounted for Viet Minh admit only to holding 9800, thus leaving gap of 13,900.

French very much concerned that present publicity both in France and US concerning deplorable condition of prisoners released to date will work against facilitating release remainder. Past experience has shown that Viet Minh would prefer to either kill off prisoners or allow them to die of illness and starvation than to release them if release is accompanied by widespread unfavorable publicity. French therefore urge everything possible be done to soft-pedal publicity while releases are going on. They are preparing full dossier of facts for publication as soon as they believe prisoners will not be released as result other methods.[1]

DILLON

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[1] Telegram 649 to Paris, Aug. 20 (repeated to Saigon and Hanoi), read as follows: "Your 668 repeated Saigon. USIA instructing media soft pedal accordance reftel. Reference French concern publicity US press Department does not consider practicable or desirable approach US correspondents here. Department repeating reftel Hanoi." (751G.00/8–2054)

751G.5/8–1254

The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson) [1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 18, 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I have received your letter of August 12, 1954, setting forth the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on requests from the Governments of the Associated States of Indochina for United States assistance in training the indigenous forces of those states. The Joint Chiefs of Staff established four preconditions for United States participation in such a training program and you add the further consideration that an international interpretation of the cease-fire agreement may in any event impose limitations on the extent of military training, as well as end item assistance, that could be undertaken by the United States in Indochina.

The first precondition of the Joint Chiefs is that there be a reasonably strong, stable civil government in control of the Indochinese states requesting United States assistance. This condition applies to the Government of Cambodia which is strong, stable and enjoys the wholehearted loyalty of the population. A similar situation likewise exists in Laos but there, because of the restrictive terms of the cease-fire agreement and likewise because the Laotian Government has never made a request for U.S. training assistance, the problem does not arise. In the case of Free Viet Nam, the civil government, which has been under the presidency of Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem for only slightly more than a month, is far from strong or stable. However, we are currently perfecting measures which may assist that Government rapidly to increase the effectiveness of its administration. I should like to point out that one of the most efficient means of enabling the Vietnamese Government to become strong is to assist it in reorganizing the National Army and in training that army. This is, of course, the familiar hen-and-egg argument as to which comes first but I would respectfully submit that the U.S. could profitably undertake two courses of action in Free Viet Nam: one, to strengthen the government by means of a political and economic nature and the other, to bolster that government by strengthening the army which supports it.

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[1] Drafted by McClintock of FE.

The second precondition established by the Joint Chiefs is that the Governments of the Associated States should formally request that the U.S. assume responsibility for training their forces and providing military equipment. As indicated above the Government of Laos has made no such request and does not contemplate one. However, the Government of Viet Nam, in a letter from Prime Minister Prince Buu Loc to the American Chargé d'Affaires dated June 18, 1954,[2] did request that MAAG Saigon participate in troop training and requested U.S. assistance in providing adequate armament and in financing a proposed expanded troop base. In the case of Cambodia, the Cambodian Minister of National Defense, General Nhiek Tioulong, in a letter dated May 20, 1954,[3] addressed to General John W. O'Daniel, Chief of MAAG Saigon, stated that the Royal Khmer Government was anxious to complete plans to set up in the minimum of time three divisions according to the methods of accelerated instruction used in Korea, on condition that the U.S. Government assured the Cambodian Government of indispensable financial and matériel support.

The third precondition of the Joint Chiefs calls for arrangements with the French guaranteeing full independence to the Associated States and providing for the phased withdrawal of French forces, French officials, and French advisers from Indochina in order to provide motivation and a sound basis for the establishment of National armed forces.

The case of Laos may be set aside since Laos has not requested U.S. assistance and under the terms of its military agreement with France is required to look to France for aid in training and other purposes. Furthermore, under the terms of the cease-fire agreement Laos is estopped from introducing foreign military personnel other than "a specified number of French military personnel required for the training of the Laotian National Army."

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[2] The letter from Buu Loc is identified in footnote 2, p. 1752.

[3] The Cambodian letter of May 20 was transmitted to Washington by the Embassy at Saigon in despatch 551 of May 22, not printed. (751G.5/5-2254)

In the case of Cambodia, *de facto* full independence already exists. Likewise during 1953 and early 1954 command of the Royal Khmer Army was handed over to the King of Cambodia and French forces have been entirely withdrawn from Cambodian soil. There is a minimum of French advisers still attached to the Royal Khmer Army.

In the case of Viet Nam, practically the entire French Expeditionary Corps still remains in that country. It would be militarily disastrous to demand the withdrawal of French forces from Free Viet Nam before the creation of a new National Army. However, as seen from this Department, there would seem to be no insuperable objection to the U.S. undertaking a training program for the Vietnamese National Army while at the same time the French forces commence a gradual phasing out from that theater.

As for the point you raised regarding the limitations of the Geneva settlement, in the view of this Department there is a limitation on the degree to which the Vietnamese armed forces can be increased. However, in my opinion, there is no provision of the cease-fire agreement regarding Viet Nam which would prevent the existing MAAG Saigon from undertaking a training mission or which would impede MAAG Saigon from rotating existing personnel to bring in number for number new personnel especially versed in military training.

In the case of Cambodia there is no obstacle whatever to the setting up of a U.S. training mission. The cease-fire agreement affecting Cambodia provides in Chapter III Article 7 that the Royal Government of Cambodia will not solicit foreign aid in war matériel, personnel or instructors *except for the purpose of effective defense of the territory.* This latter clause makes it entirely possible for the Cambodian Government to request a foreign training mission and for the U.S., if it so desires, to provide such a mission. In the opinion of this Department, it would be most helpful to the futherance of our national policy in Indochina, if the U.S. should reply affirmatively to the letter of the Defense Minister cited above, and it is recommended that the Joint Chiefs give their consent to the establishment of a MAAG/Phnom Penh which would provide both training and logistical assistance to the Royal Khmer Army. The Department of State likewise feels that sympathetic consideration should be given to the establishment of a training mission in MAAG Saigon to assist in the development of an effective Vietnamese National Army.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

751G.00/7-3054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, August 18, 1954—5 : 29 p. m.

610. Limit distribution. Personal from Secretary. Department 366 to Paris, Paris 409 and 438, Saigon 394.[2] I am convinced that if free world is to make most of fighting chance remaining to it in Indochina we must move ahead rapidly developing and maintaining nationalist resolve in non-Communist areas. I believe Mendes-France is as aware this as we are, but backward-looking elements may take advantage his preoccupation other urgent matters to return to the Franco-Vietnamese relationship and to a kind of government in Viet-Nam which has always failed in past. Paris 438 not reassuring in these respects especially when considered together with reports reaching us of intrigues of some southern leaders and in view time which may be required for LaChambre–Cheysson study.

We do not wish make it appear Ngo Dinh Diem our protégé or that we are irrevocably committed to him. On other hand we do believe kind of thing he stands for is necessary ingredient of success and we do not now see it elsewhere.

To make sure Mendes aware our concern Dillon should hand him following as personal message from me : [3]

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[1] Drafted by McClintock of FE. Also sent to London as telegram 973. Repeated for information to Saigon as 636, to Phnom Penh as 26, to Hanoi as 213, and to Vientiane as 15. This message was developed within the State Department under the primary direction of FE, running through several versions between Aug. 2 and 16. Documentation on the drafting process is in files 751G.00 and 611.51G. The message was approved in draft by the Operations Coordinating Board on Aug. 11. (OCB files, lot 62 D 430, "Minutes") For comments on the subject by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, see letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State, Aug. 12, p. 1938.

On Aug. 18, Secretary Dulles submitted a draft of this telegram to President Eisenhower. That draft, identical in substance to the message as actually transmitted to Paris, was accompanied by a memorandum by the Secretary for the President titled "Message to French Prime Minister Tracing New U.S Policy of Direct Aid to Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam." The memorandum read as follows: "The enclosed telegram embodies a policy message from me to Mendes-France along the lines which I discussed with you yesterday. It indicates that it will be future United States policy to give direct assistance to the states of Indochina in maintaining their political and territorial integrity against further Communist aggression. The essence of the new policy is that we desire the states of Indochina to be completely independent, that they establish strong and stable governments and that, to assure the latter end, the United States will henceforth channel the bulk of its aid, both economic and military, directly to the three states of Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam." (Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file, Dulles–Herter series)

[2] For telegram 366 to Paris, July 28, see p. 1888. Regarding telegram 409 from Paris, July 29, see footnote 3, p. 1889. For telegram 438 from Paris, July 30, see p. 1896. Telegram 394 from Saigon, July 30, in which Ambassador Heath expressed agreement with the content of telegram 366 to Paris, is not printed. (751G.00/7-3054)

[3] In telegram 706 from Paris, Aug. 19, the Embassy reported that the Secretary's message had been delivered to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the absence of Prime Minister Mendès-France at Brussels. (751G.00/8-1954) The Embassy further reported in telegram 710 of Aug. 20 that the Foreign Ministry had forwarded the message to Mendès-France. (751G.00/8-2054)

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister: In the days that have passed since the settlement at Geneva, I have been giving earnest thought to the future policy of the United States toward Indochina.

I believe you and I are in complete agreement that in South Viet-Nam a strong Nationalist Government must be developed and supported if the world is not to witness an early Communist take-over and a still greater menace to South and Southeast Asia, with repercussions in Africa.

Your own recent declarations of French intentions to accord full independence to the Associated States will certainly contribute to this end if they are vigorously executed. In anticipation of that they have already had an excellent effect in this country, for they are recognized as coming from a man who has long stood for independence and who has shown a resolve to make good on his promises.

We here have been thinking about what we might appropriately do to help get an effective Vietnamese government. In our opinion, M. Ngo Dinh Diem, initially at least, has a better chance of rallying and holding nationalist sentiment than most of the Vietnamese who seem now to be on the scene, or in the wings. We recognize that his government needs more realism, experience and a broader geographical representation, but it does seem to provide a nucleus for future efforts.

We have, however, been concerned at a growing feeling among our Vietnamese friends that the United States and the free world have abandoned them.

In order to eliminate that impression and at the same time to lay a firmer basis for a strenuous effort to preserve freedom in Viet-Nam, we plan the following steps:

1. In a message addressed to the President of the Council of Ministers of Viet-Nam, President Eisenhower will express on behalf of the American people his and their appreciation of the efforts of the Vietnamese Government and people in the struggle for freedom and the readiness of the American people to continue to aid in this struggle.

2. In addition to military material assistance and economic aid, we are prepared to give direct assistance to the Associated States including budgetary support, in addition to the support furnished by the French Union. Subject to a practical solution of the transfer problem and the establishment of adequate controls, we believe presently some and eventually all of this aid should be given directly rather than through the French Government, as has been done previously, particularly in connection with the execution of the 'Navarre Plan.' This approach seems to us in keeping with the independent status of these states and necessary to help them to develop their self-confidence and self-reliance. It is also necessary from the U.S. domestic standpoint. Much of the aid so far provided was justified to the Congress for support of the French Union forces in the war against the Viet Minh. Now that war has ceased and the Foreign Aid Bill passed by the Senate on July 29 calls for 'the furnishing, as far as possible, of direct assistance to the Associated States of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam.'[4] Accordingly, to adjust our policy to the changed conditions now exist-

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[4] For documentation on the Mutual Security legislation of 1954, see volume I.

ing in Indochina and to meet the requirements of the U.S. Congress we plan in future to deal directly with the governments of the Associated States in questions concerning economic or military aid to these states.

3. Although our final decision will depend upon the establishment of the complete independence which you have publicly affirmed it is the intention of the French Government to grant, and will be conditioned likewise by the extent to which the recipient governments give evidence of their stability and capacity to carry out needed reforms, we are also prepared to consider the requests of the Associated States such as have been made by Viet-Nam and Cambodia to undertake direct military training of their armed forces. In the future and to the extent possible under the restrictions of the Geneva settlements we are prepared to consider the establishment of training missions in their territories. We would also wish to exercise our existing right to request redistribution of certain material from stocks now on hand in Indochina directly to the Associated States. In view of the changed circumstances and in order to accelerate the development of reliable native armies we believe it will be necessary to revise or rescind the Pentapartite agreement of December 1950 between France, Laos, Cambodia, Viet-Nam and the U.S. In any case we believe that the Associated States can and should be brought into more direct and mutually beneficial contact with military planning, training and logistical activities. We would, of course, consult closely with the French Authorities in all these matters and expect to continue the harmonious cooperation which has hitherto existed between us. I understand that General Ely and General O'Daniel have already discussed at least the possibility of a training function for our present Military Aid Advisory Group.

There are undoubtedly many other possibilities for effective action in Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia. For example, we are considering in what ways we can modify our economic aid and development programs for best results in the changed situation. We are considering special help in the refugee and resettlement program and increased aid in the field of technical assistance. I believe that the measures I have listed above are the most urgent and should produce an effect upon Vietnamese public opinion which you and I both would desire.

I have not set forth any time schedule for these measures but I should think that at least the message from President Eisenhower should be delivered soon. There are clearly a number of technical matters which should be worked out between our governments by the experts.

The main thing, I believe, is to move strongly together to dissipate the present discouragement in Viet-Nam. The stakes are so high that I feel confident that we shall succeed. I take this opportunity to express my high regard and best wishes. John Foster Dulles."

Embassy London should give copy above message Foreign Office on confidential basis.[5]

DULLES

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[5] In telegram 874 from London, Aug. 19, the Embassy reported that a copy of the message had been delivered to an official of the Foreign Office. (751G.00/8–1954)

Editorial Note

On August 18, 1954, the Senate confirmed Robert McClintock to be Ambassador to Cambodia and Charles W. Yost to be Minister to Laos. Henceforth, the United States Ambassador at Saigon was accredited only to the State of Vietnam. President Eisenhower had expressed the intention of the United States to appoint resident diplomatic chiefs of mission to Cambodia and Laos in his news conference statement of July 21, 1954; for text, see editorial note, page 1864.

751G.00/8–1954 : Telegram

The Chargé at Phnom Penh (Goodman) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, August 19, 1954—10 p. m.
[Received 3:13 p. m.]

71. Sent Saigon 87, repeated information Paris 65, Bangkok, New Delhi unnumbered. Today I received two interesting if somewhat conflicting comments on operations of Cambodian, Viet Minh mixed commission now meeting Svayrieng. Acting chief International Control Commission, Indian General Singh, said he impressed by friendliness and goodwill on both sides at opening meeting August 14. They were, he said, "falling on each others necks" and in formal speeches seemed trying outdo each other in expressions their desire for peace and eagerness cooperate. In his turn Singh spoke to them of futility war as evidenced by fact "no one" had won Indochina conflict, and importance of "unique" task they cooperating in—peacefully to liquidate a war. General said that in discussions after meeting he found Viet Minh charming cultured men, high percentage of whom spoke English, and all of whom tried hard give impression their peaceful desires. He feels they are cooperating beautifully, and that cease fire will be successful here.

In contrast this rosy view Prime Minister Penn Nouth told me earlier in day that mixed commission talks now running into snags, with Viet Minh closely examining every punctuation mark in cease fire agreement, and quibbling over every detail. Most irritating demand was for Cambodian, Viet Minh representative to join delegation. Through his representatives Prime Minister answered agreement provides very clearly for equal participation Cambodia and DRV, and he cares not who they have in their delegation so long as they labelled DRV. Although all Viet Minh regular units said now to have withdrawn from country, another point troubling Prime Minister was apparent failure or difficulty Viet Minh thus far to have disarmed provincial troops (so-called Khmer Viet Minh). Since this to have been done within 30 days from beginning of truce, Cambodians yesterday gave Viet Minh 8 days to accomplish it, after which Royal Armies will resume normal mopping up operations.

Differences in attitudes these two men and in their interpretations of smiling Viet Minh approach, perhaps inevitable results their difference types involvement in truce operation. However, fact Viet Minh are smiling and trying impress international commission undoubtedly indicates their appreciation long-range factors, and perhaps supports General Singh's thesis (Embtel 62 to Department) [1] their desire make cease fire effective in order consolidate their hold on Vietnam before concentrating on Cambodia. At same time they do not intend to let pass any opportunity improve their political or psychological position and would like nothing better than leave strong cadres scattered about this country. However, Cambodians remain vigilant and will very likely foil these attempts. Their firmness is expected but heartening.

GOODMAN

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[1] In telegram 62 from Phnom Penh, Aug. 12, not printed, Goodman summarized a conversation of that morning with General Singh. The General contended that the Viet Minh would fulfill all cease-fire terms throughout Indochina because it was in their long-range interest to do so. (751G.00/8-1254)

251G.51G22/8-1754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, August 19, 1954—3:24 p. m.

652. We seriously concerned with report set out your 613.[2]

You are instructed immediately to secure an audience with Diem and say that US having responded with such speed and in terms such magnitude his request for transportation in lifting evacuees from Tonkin is dismayed at apparent complete lack proper facilities for reception these refugees upon their arrival in South Viet Nam. Inform Diem US while glad give aid Free Viet Nam must condition its aid upon performance by Vietnamese Government. You should orally suggest to Prime Minister that Phuoc who now responsible Vietnamese refugee program should be given powers of requisition of civilian labor and transport facilities, an adequate staff and under direct instruction Prime Minister full support from General Hinh and Vietnamese National Army.[3]

You likewise authorized inform General Ely serious view we take this situation and read to General Ely or Deputy text instructions sent

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[1] Drafted by McClintock. Repeated for information to Paris as 624, to Manila as 642, to Tokyo as 373, and to Hanoi as 215.

[2] Dated Aug. 17, p. 1951.

[3] In telegram 654 from Saigon, Aug. 20, Heath reported that on Aug. 19, prior to the receipt of the Department's telegram, an Embassy official had discussed the refugee problem with Diem, and that it seemed unwise to raise the question again immediately. Heath also reported that the first U.S. naval ship with 2,000 refugees had docked on Aug. 19. (251G.51G22/8-2054)

Dillon to make an immediate *démarche* with French Government on this problem. This text provided in next succeeding telegram.[4]

DULLES

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[4] The instructions sent to Ambassador Dillon are contained in telegram 625 to Paris (653 to Saigon), Aug. 19, *infra*. In telegram 693 from Saigon, Aug. 24, Heath reported that an Embassy official had read the message to Acting Commissioner General Daridan on Aug. 21. Daridan had characterized the message as "pretty strong." (251G.51G22/8–2454)

251G.51G22/8–1754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, August 19, 1954—3:25 p. m.

625. We deeply concerned with refugee situation depicted Saigon telegram 613 repeated Paris 212.[2]

You are instructed immediately call upon Minister for Relations with Associated States and say we are making immediate representations to Vietnamese Government indicating that in return for our aid in assisting to transport evacuees from Tonkin we expect comparable performance from Vietnamese Government. You should recall to M. La Chambre France also has officially requested US aid this regard. Reports reaching us from Saigon indicate "French do not move until specifically requested" and that French are giving first priority to evacuation French troops and their families. Express view orally US feels French have moral obligation do more than they are now undertaking not only to move refugees but to assist Vietnamese Government in their reception and resettlement. You should add it is clear that only organization really competent undertake measures to deal with this mass migration is French Army on spot and we shall be much surprised if General Ely as Commander in Chief does not take immediate steps meet this situation.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by McClintock of FE. Repeated for information to Saigon as 653, to Manila as 643, to Tokyo as 374, and to Hanoi as 216.

[2] Dated Aug. 17, p. 1951.

State–JCS meetings, lot 61 D 417

Substance of Discussions of State–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting at the Pentagon Building, August 20, 1954, 11:30 a. m.[1]

TOP SECRET

[Here follow a list of those present (24) and discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

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[1] This State Department draft was not cleared with the participants.

3. *Proposed Message from President Eisenhower to the Prime Minister of Vietnam.*[2]

Mr. Bowie called on Ambassador McClintock to discuss this item. The Ambassador referred briefly to the stated JCS reservations on aid to Vietnam: that a condition to the granting of military aid to Vietnam should be (1) a stable government and (2) an effective Vietnamese armed force. Mr. McClintock pointed out that the question of whether or not Vietnam has a stable government will depend a good deal on an available effective Vietnamese armed force, and to be effective the armed forces of Vietnam must depend heavily on the U.S. for assistance.

Admiral Radford agreed with Mr. McClintock on this point. He also said we would have to do something and do it quickly. This should not be an insuperable problem, he said, since we have a mission and equipment there. He emphasized particularly that we must deal directly with the Vietnamese Government with no control by the French military authority.

In reviewing a copy of the draft letter from the President to the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Admiral Duncan referred to the paragraph reading as follows:

> "Thirdly, we have informed the government of France that stocks of US-supplied arms and matériel now in Viet-Nam should insofar as practical be redistributed to the National Armies of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and that French Union forces departing from Viet-Nam will leave behind, for the use of the three National Armies, such arms and equipment supplied by the United States as we may judge to be necessary to maintain those armies for the effective defense of their territories."

Admiral Duncan questioned the advisability of including this paragraph. He did not know of any form of information which we had given to France that U.S. matériel now in Vietnam should be redistributed to the National Armies of the Associated States, or that French Union forces leaving Vietnam were to "leave behind" certain arms and equipment supplied by the U.S. He questioned the advisability on the one hand of urging the French to do everything possible to return this matériel to us while at the same time letting it be known we were going to redistribute it to the local governments. The French might just walk away and leave the matériel where it was.

Admiral Radford took the position that in this letter to the Prime Minister we should limit ourselves to generalities and should state simply that we will undertake to supply the Vietnamese direct. There is no need, he stated, to inform them of the source of these supplies.

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[2] The specific draft under consideration here has not been identified. For the text of the letter actually transmitted by President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Diem, Oct. 23, see p. 2166.

Admiral Duncan remarked that in drafting this letter to the Prime Minister it was necessary to keep in mind that you can't just rule France off the course, and that she still has important forces there.

It was agreed that Ambassador McClintock would redraft the letter in the light of this discussion, and would subsequently communicate with appropriate officials in Defense on the subject.

751G.00/8–2054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, August 20, 1954—6 p. m.

715. Repeated information Saigon 74, Hanoi 80, London unnumbered, Phnom Penh 1, Vientiane 2. From Parks [?]. In Mendes-France's absence advance copy Secretary's message to Prime Minister delivered yesterday by Joyce to Parodi, acting head Foreign Office.[1]

Parodi read message very carefully and without going into specific detail on points contained stated that it would require considerable thought before reply could be drafted. He was obviously distressed at repeated references to "independence" and statements in numbered paragraph 2 that "all of this aid should be given directly rather than through the French Government as has been done previously" and "we plan in future to deal directly with the Governments of the Associated States in questions concerning economic or military aid to these states".

Regarding independence we of course pointed out that the Government had made several public and private statements recently of its intention to carry through granting of full independence, publicly most recently by Mendes himself during last Indochina debate in Assembly and privately to us on two recent occasions by LaChambre. We also pointed out that as stated our aid will be conditioned by extent to which recipient governments give evidence of their stability and capacity to carry out needed reforms.

These arguments seemed to have little effect in placating Parodi's concern. We are not surprised for it has been evident for some time that French consider we have almost psychotic attachment to "independence" without giving sufficient thought and attention to the practical problems and risks involved. Although we do not question the sincerity of Mendes and the present government with regard to its policy of granting full sovereignty to the states as promised, this must not in any sense be interpreted as including a relaxation of their resolute attachment to the French Union concept. It should be clearly understood that the French, rightly or wrongly, logically or illogically, believe it entirely compatible that they should grant full sovereignty to the Associated States while at the same time retaining the French Union relationship. This has been made clear on many recent occasions, notably in the Assembly during the post Geneva debate[2] when Mendes attested to the intention of his government to grant full independence to the states. The acceptance of French parliamentarian and public opinion to the principle of independence remains, as heretofore, subject to the proviso that the French Union relationship be maintained. The Mendes-France or any prospective successor government would find it extremely difficult if not impossible to gain public support and parliamentary approval for any progressive future policy concerning Vietnam which did not include as a *sine qua non* membership of the states within the French Union.

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[1] For the Secretary's message to Prime Minister Mendès-France, see telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, p. 1957.

To the average Frenchman, including parliamentarians, the practical results of maintaining the French Union relationship between France and the Associated States are principally:

(1) An example position other overseas territories, the retention of which within the French Union framework of nations is vital to the existence of France as a world power of any consequence.

(2) France acquires certain economic and commercial advantages which are mutually profitable.

(3) French culture can be maintained and advanced in remote quarters of the world where it has already taken root. (The importance of this is often underestimated abroad, particularly in the United States. One of the first subjects which occupied French official and public opinion following the Geneva settlement was as much what would happen to the French schools, museums, churches, seminaries, etc. in Tonkin as what would happen to the cement works and coal mines.)

The same average Frenchman is not interested in any union relationship which might be termed a one way street. He is utterly convinced that the Vietnamese has advanced his lot under French tutelage more than would otherwise have been the case and will continue to do so under a form of union association which will also benefit the other member of the partnership—France. But he is no longer interested in having him advance it at French expense, as has been the case in recent years.

As previously reported, the French regard the question of whether aid is to be furnished to Vietnam directly or indirectly through them as the most important issue now facing them in their relations with the United States concerning Indochina. Their confidence in the ability of the Vietnamese to govern themselves, which had already been severely shaken in the past, has now been subjected to even greater strain as result of what they regard as the shocking negligence and inefficiency of the present Vietnamese Government. They sincerely believe that if United States aid were turned over directly to the Vietnamese it would at best provide new fuel for graft and corruption or at worst serve as bargaining ammunition in the hands of the present or successor governments for use in trading, in traditional oriental fashion, with the Viet Minh, the sects, etc. One thing of which they are absolutely certain is that under Vietnamese control the aid will not be used efficiently.

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[2] Regarding the National Assembly debate of July 22–23, see footnote 2, p. 1871.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the difference between our concept of dealing with the Indochina problem as expressed in the Secretary's message and that held by the French. The latter are convinced that if the Vietnamese are given, without restriction, an erector set with all the parts for a ten story building they will end up with a one story cabin and the remaining parts will either be sold or end up in the pockets of the builders. On the other hand if the parts are handed out with care and supervision, a well-built five story building will emerge after many trials and tribulations. Furthermore, the French believe that their past sacrifices on behalf of Vietnam and their obligation as a member of French Union dictate that they should be the construction supervisor.

Upon Mendes' return to Paris, the Ambassador will, in his next interview, discuss the Secretary's message further with him. In the meanwhile Parodi reported that he is forwarding it without delay to Mendes in Brussels (this has now been done) and hopes to be able to make a reply soon after the Prime Minister's return to Paris. Later the Foreign Office phoned to ask again that Presidential statement be deferred until the Secretary's message could be studied and a reply could be carefully drafted.

DILLON

751G.5 MSP/8–2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET SAIGON, August 22, 1954—8 a. m.

668. Repeated information Paris 229. Re Department telegram 491, repeated information Paris 486.[2] Re paragraph 1 reference telegram, the elements of program for most effective use of direct US economic, financial, and military aid to individual Associated States are:

1. US training assistance in behalf of armies of Associated States.
2. Continuation end item assistance.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in four parts. On Aug. 18, 1954, Robert McClintock was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia and Charles W. Yost Minister to Laos. Henceforth, the U.S. Ambassador at Saigon was accredited only to the State of Vietnam.

[2] Dated Aug. 7, p. 1924.

3. Military budget support.
4. Economic aid.

I. *Direct aid*

To be most effective in carrying out over-all aspects of US policy, aid should be given directly to governments of Associated States. Over-all US aid is in itself powerful lever, employment of which can and should be utilized to insure adoption of US defined objectives. Our aid should be coordinated with any French programs, but we should no longer be required to look through French glasses in making our aid available here.

II. *Training*

1. From viewpoint background it will be recalled that both French and free Vietnamese have asked for US training assistance in behalf free Vietnam Army (FVA).

Free Vietnam request made through diplomatic channels; French through General Ely's 9 June 1954 proposals to General O'Daniel.[3] Problem fulfillment these requests decidedly intensified by US personnel ceiling imposed by truce agreement. Of 342 individuals in Indochina 22 July 1954, estimate maximum of 150–200 could be made available for training after program rotation to obtain qualified personnel.

2. Limited US capability makes it imperative our training effort be carefully tailored to provide optimum direct assistance to free Vietnamese in achieving autonomous FVA reflecting US methodology, organizational concepts and doctrine.

3. Utilization of US training capability to influence selected few FVA units and schools can only result in divisive effect by creating two parallel structures: one US, the other French. Use of US personnel as advisors to French training organization prevents direct impact FVA and camouflages our effort. Aim must be to employ US assistance as catalyst to bring French and free Vietnamese together within framework of US military system.

4. Fortunately, situation is favorable to course of action which concentrates US capability on single training undertaking permitting direct and lasting impact on FVA. French have World War II record of achievement under US organization and operational methods. They have taken steps to carry out their training of FVA along US lines developed in Korea. By coupling this leaning toward US mold with keen free Vietnam desire to embrace US system *in toto*, two goals are within reach: an ultimate FVA in the US image, plus French-free Vietnamese unity in common undertaking. Important political and psychological rewards accompany this approach.

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[3] See telegram 2712 from Saigon, June 10, p. 1674.

5. To give expression to foregoing concept, considered here that US training effort should be addressed to establishment and operation of command and staff school for FVA officer corps and, to lesser degree, NCO corps. French would be encouraged to attend. Object of school would be creation of strong, enthusiastic, loyal and soundly-indoctrinated FVA "leadership and instructor corps" capable of installing and perpetuating US methodology, organization and doctrine throughout FVA. Through this approach US influence imparted to FVA as whole rather than to segment thereof. French participation would not only assist their own grasp of US system, but would enhance their training of FVA. Above all, this formula joins US, French and free Vietnamese in team dedicated to single purpose. Current situation is exact opposite.

6. FVA transition not possible in short period of time nor by short-cut techniques. Despite desire some free Vietnamese quarters to switch immediately, FVA dependent upon parent French establishment to degree precluding such possibility. In order, however, to provide visible evidence intent create autonomous FVA along US lines, and at same time to establish favorable psychological accompaniment, French might be prevailed upon to announce target date 12–18 months in future by which time autonomy and transformation will have been completed. Prior this date US would concentrate on C and SS, leaving training of FVA to French. Subsequent to transition, US would arrange major program of inspection with FVA.

7. Idea of command and staff school has not yet been discussed with French. Also, previous paragraphs do not discuss Laos and Cambodia. We consider that Laos should be left to French responsibility. Question of US sharing in training of Cambodian army must be decided at governmental level. While offering to share responsibility for training Vietnamese, Ely hopes conserve French monopoly in Cambodia. However, it is our feeling that if we took over training entire Cambodian army on a phased basis of accomplishment, or at least shared in such training along lines set forth for Vietnam, Cambodia would have much better army.

8. Above paragraphs also do not cover question of para-military forces. We believe there should be created, as an integral part of national military establishment, strong militia organized along village and provincial lines, and that suppletifs and confessional military organizations should be phased into national army establishment.

III. *End item assistance*

1. End item assistance and military budget support should be programmed and administered by one group, preferably civilians employed by Department of Defense, so that all MAAG military

personnel here could be used for training purposes. We should give all end item assistance necessary and possible under Geneva truce agreements. For Vietnam this would mean replacements while for Cambodia and Laos build-up of military establishments is permissable. At the moment we are unable to hazard a guess as to dollar cost of such assistance, but it would probably be more than half of the dollar cost of such assistance as programmed for 1954.

2. Job which this group would have to do would be costing of Associated States forces and follow-up of implementation of program as costed. In past this job has been performed by French as part of over-all command functions. As result few individuals in Associated States are ready to take on this job. In addition to costing, this job would involve end-use inspections and auditing of expenditures made by Associated States for which reimbursement would be requested from US. Because of lack of experience of local officials and the well known tendency towards graft, a considerable number of American personnel would be required, and it would be necessary for them to have complete access to records and personnel of Armed Forces of Associated States. At present, as far as we know not even nucleus of such group exists. If Washington accepts idea of direct aid and of group such as this, such group should be constituted immediately and sent out. Please advise your ideas and intentions on this point.

3. As long as French forces of any size remain in Associated States, French should, of course, be consulted on size and composition our end item aid programs to Associated States.

IV. *Military budget support*

1. In round billions we estimate that the Vietnamese military budget in 1955, excluding end items but including cost of a militia, would be 17,000,000,000 to 20,000,000,000 piasters. The regular civilian budget would approximate 2,500,000,000 piasters and an extraordinary budget for economic reconstruction 5,000,000,000 piasters. The total, therefore, would be 25,000,000,000 to 28,000,000,000 piasters, assuming that Vietnamese Government carried forward programs which we would envisage to be necessary. From its own resources Vietnam could raise approximately 4,000,000,000 piasters through taxation and deficit financing, under existing taxation and institutional arrangements. The balance of 21,000,000,000 to 24,000,000,000 piasters (600,000,000 to 700,000,000 dollars), would have to come from outside aid. Deficits of Cambodia and Laos combined would probably be another 3,500,000,000 piasters or 100,000,000 dollars. These figures illustrate the reason military budget support and economic aid should be considered one program although administered separately.

V. *Economic aid*

1. Several other agencies and countries have indicated intention of giving economic aid to Associated States. French have proposed substantial aid, and we believe French are only ones who will give aid of any consequence. French have recently proposed here joint program, including joint planning and pooling financial resources, of 13,000,000,000 piasters over two-year period of which they would make available 5,000,000,000 and US 8,000,000,000. We believe it unwise to attempt a joint economic program with French although close coordination will be necessary. Any such joint program would give rise to interpretation, perhaps not wholly unfounded, that French were using American participation as front to maintain control of Vietnam economy. Any French economic aid should be a net addition to total aid not a mere channeling of our aid through France. We do not know if French expect military budget support of their forces in Indochina, but we do not believe such support should be given at same time French are extending economic aid to Associated States, since this in effect would be continuation of system under which we have given aid to Associated States through France. Furthermore, we question wisdom of budget support for French forces in Indochina in any case. There is need for French to remain until sound Vietnamese army is built up to prevent military vacuum which Viet Minh would fill, but we believe French forces will remain here in some strength to try to protect French interests and prestige in Far East.

2. USOM has made preliminary estimate that program costing dollars 150 million could be carried forward FY 1955, as contrasted French proposed program mentioned above which would total 8.5 billion piasters (dollars 240 million). Both estimates represent total requirements believed necessary attain objectives. Neither enters into detail as to which country finances how much. However, both assume that economic aid program will be carried on by both countries. Detailed breakdown of USOM proposal by categories and countries follows by USOM airgram.

3. Size of our Economic Aid Program, therefore, would depend on type and amount of French economic aid if any. General range of total foreign aid as shown above would be 21 to 24 billion piasters equivalent. With an aid program of this magnitude Associated States would have no lack of foreign exchange for needed programs. We would still need to insure a wiser use of these foreign exchange resources than has occurred in past. This should include but not be limited to US observer or member on any foreign exchange allocation board. There is precedent for such system since we now have an observer on quadripartite import committee, and we have been members of exchange allocating boards in other countries.

4. It is almost certain that quadripartite economic system will soon be broken up, that national banks will be created in each of Associated States, and that foreign exchange control will be taken over by governments of Associated States. These states may remain in French franc area or French Union dollar pool. Whether they do or not should make no difference in our giving dollar aid directly to these governments. However, whether they use such dollars themselves or put them in a French Union dollar pool is a matter of concern to us and is related to question of continued French backing currencies Associated States. We should have control over eventual disposition of our dollar aid.

5. With foreign exchange problem solved principal problem becomes securing and using effectively of piasters. Commercial import program as in the past would not generate piasters fast enough for our total aid program. A single system of securing piasters must be instituted so that it will be flexible enough to afford sufficient piasters to carry forward all programs.

VI. *Controls and leverage*

(1) US program should include (1) personnel for training, planning and controlling financial aid for military establishments of Associated States and (2) advice and control on economic aid programs to be furnished by USOM, which should include but not be limited to projects and end use checks as in past. Governments of these countries must develop positive economic policies. Relative economic stability which has existed in these countries in past has been due more to circumstances than to deliberate policy. It would be dangerous to assume that such favorable circumstances will continue to exist. We should assure at governmental level that our economic and military aid will not be dissipated through unwise economic and military policies. Among other things we should advise on creation and operation of national banks, currency, and credit policies, and land reform.

(2) All of above paragraphs assume that our principal control will be at policy making level in form of advice and assistance. At same time we can not cease auditing and end use checks on our funds and commodities. Latter controls should be considered in nature of spot checks on overall system of controls rather than considered as controls themselves. This system of control assumes more American personnel on the spot.

(3) Outlined program requires governments insure security will be maintained well enough so that program activities can be carried out freely in all regions of Cambodia, Laos and remaining Vietnam. In this connection, nonmilitary security forces, such as police and national *gendarmerie*, should be developed.

4. Also requires that governments Associated States become strong enough to institute policies and administrative procedures in order to make effective use of aid offered. Hence, high priority is assigned to development of public administration program.

5. In view Communist propaganda successes and stepped up activities, essential governments Associated States be able to tell people what is being done for them and how they can help themselves. Hence, high priority is assigned to provision supplies, equipment, and technical assistance to permit rapid expansion of information services. Outline of USIS program forwarded as enclosure Embassy despatch 59, August 13.[4]

6. If above general lines of program are agreed, further refinement of personnel needs and financial requirements will be necessary. Pending Washington agencies response to foregoing recommendations, we will continue study along these lines.

7. This is country team message.

HEATH

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[4] Not printed.

PPS files, lot 65 D 101, "Indochina"

White House Press Release

LOWRY AIR FORCE BASE, Denver, Colorado, August 22, 1954.

The cease-fire agreement which terminated hostilities in Viet Nam provided that persons on either side of the dividing line, which is roughly at the 17th parallel of latitude, would be free to move to places of their own choice. Very soon all of North Viet Nam, which includes the Delta of the Red River otherwise known as Tonkin, will be handed over provisionally to the Vietminh Government of Ho Chi Minh.

Thousands of refugees of Tonkin, fearful of being placed under the Communist yoke, are moving outward to Free Viet Nam. The French Government has offered transport to these evacuees and both the French Navy and Air Force are doing what they can to carry out this movement.

The French Air Force is presently lifting approximately 3,400 evacuees a day from air fields at Hanoi and Haiphong to the Saigon area. Likewise the French Navy is carrying refugees and at the same time transporting French expeditionary forces to Saigon.

However, the number of refugees has so increased that both the French authorities and Vietnamese Government have asked additional assistance of the United States in transporting these Vietnamese citizens who prefer to give up their homes in order to remain free.

The United States promptly agreed to their request. The French and Vietnamese authorities retain complete responsibility for the care of Vietnamese citizens who choose to leave the Delta area. The United States is providing ships to help transport refugees; and in addition, is furnishing some tentage and other supplies to better enable the French and Vietnamese officials ashore to take care of the refugees.

It is estimated that at least 200,000 civilian refugees must be moved from Hanoi or Haiphong before September 10th.

The Commander in Chief Pacific, Admiral Felix Stump, has instructed the Fifth Amphibious Group of the Western Pacific Fleet to assist in the transportation from Haiphong to points in South and Central Viet Nam a total of between 80,000 and 100,000 refugees. The majority of refugees will probably be moved by LST's. In order to help expedite this movement, however, transport vessels and commercial freighters of the Military Sea Transport Service were dispatched earlier under the command of Rear Admiral Lorenzo Sabin and are already loading refugees at Haiphong. Several thousands of Vietnamese have already been evacuated by this Service.

Fortunately, Free Viet Nam is a country with ample land resources for the resettlement of almost any number of Vietnamese who desire to flee from Communist domination. In the rich rice lands of the Mekong River Delta and the high lands of South Viet Nam there is surplus land where the Tonkinese farmers can re-establish new homesteads and work out new lives in freedom.

The United States will continue to assist the Vietnamese Government, headed by Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, in their humanitarian endeavor to bring the Vietnamese to Free Viet Nam.

It is noteworthy that although Vietnamese from Tonkin are clamoring to leave the area soon to be under Communist rule, no Vietminh adherents from Free Viet Nam have clamored to be transported North to settle in that area under the government of Ho Chi Minh.

251G.51G22/8–2354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, August 23, 1954—4 p. m.

731. Repeated information Saigon 76, Hanoi 9, Manila 4, Tokyo 4. We called on LaChambre in accordance Department's instructions (Department's 625).[1] He was prepared make general review Indochina and conversation therefore lasted two hours. We noted our re-

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[1] Dated Aug. 19, p. 1962.

marks intended General Ely as well (Department's 624)[2] who in Paris although not present. Ely now en route Saigon.

LaChambre gratified learn we had informed Vietnamese Government we expected a comparable performance from them in offering aid transporting evacuees from north. He reviewed difficulties French had encountered in organizing plan evacuation and resettlement refugees in south. French had made pointed effort avoid interfering in beginning but were eventually obliged do so in face of shocking ineffectiveness of Diem Government. We stated that in offering our aid to French as well as Vietnamese we of course expected them to contribute to it everything possible to facilitate program, pointing out that French army was only group able to carry out plan in short time available.

LaChambre stressed intention Government and French authorities Vietnam do everything within their power to carry out evacuation and resettlement program. French wished assist Vietnamese authorities to full extent Vietnamese wished but found it difficult to be placed in position of being accused of "interfering with sovereign government" in offering their aid. They had tried to follow policy of not moving until specifically requested because of this but had eventually been obliged do so in order get anything moving. LaChambre spoke glowingly of cooperation of American authorities both in Saigon and neighboring Far East areas. Particularly grateful to Ambassador Heath, Consul Cameron and General O'Daniel who had been tireless in their efforts get things done.

He then gave us details evacuation operation, résumé of which:

A. Air evacuation.

3,000 people being moved per day by air, approximately half civilians and half military. First priority granted dependents both French and Vietnamese soldiers, second priority to civilians, both French and Vietnamese.

B. Sea transport.

Space available for 100,000 persons per month in United States and 20,000 per month in French bottoms. All troops (French and Vietnamese) consisting of approximately 110,000 men, 70,000 officers moved this way. In addition undetermined number of civilians will have to be moved by sea. Present estimate approximately 50,000 though this figure may be greatly increased before evacuation completed. Possibility, for instance, Chinese colony Nam Dinh may decide they wish to be evacuated. Number requesting evacuation varies daily with developments.

We inquired regarding differentiation between French and Vietnamese and were informed that there was none. French colony in Hanoi of approximately 6,000 more than half of whom Eurasians, reluctant to leave and majority would probably remain. As result LaChambre assurances we refrained from pressing point of whether evacuation priority had been given to French troops and families. LaChambre made it clear no intention leave any Vietnamese behind who wished be evacuated.

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[2] Sent to Saigon as telegram 652, Aug. 19, p. 1961.

LaChambre had been given copy Secretary's message to Mendes-France (Department's 610)[3] which he had handed to Foreign Office and which had been sent to Mendes in Brussels (Embassy's 706 and 710).[4] He was distressed at its contents along general lines reported Embassy's 715.[5] Although he did not refer specifically to references independence he reiterated previous statements that French Government intended grant full sovereignty to states. Subject which disturbed him most was reference to intention grant aid directly to Vietnam and our failure entirely to mention aid to French Expeditionary Corps. He stated that it was firm intention Mendes' Government maintain Expeditionary Corps in south under conviction that its presence there necessary to assure stability which Vietnam must have if it is to be preserved as an independent state outside Bamboo Curtain. In order do so they hope receive United States aid as in past. Nothing would please the French public and parliamentary opinion more, LaChambre stated, than to return French forces to France *in toto* but that would be quickest method assure success Communist objectives and present government had no intention doing so. LaChambre then pointed out with moderation but great emphasis risks of giving military aid to the Vietnamese along arguments previously reported.

We said that we would await French reaction to President's proposed statement with interest. LaChambre said that he had been requested by Foreign Office to submit his comments and that they would be incorporated in formal reply from Foreign Office to be expected soon after Prime Minister's return from Brussels.

Principal additional subject covered which has not been previously reported was possible return of Bao Dai to Vietnam. Although LaChambre personally is most ill-disposed towards Bao Dai he is becoming more and more convinced that in spite of grave weaknesses Bao Dai may have to be used again. LaChambre has discussed matter with General Catroux, Albert Sarraut and General Ely so far and intends continue studying question. To date all agreed that possibility of Bao Dai's return could not be entirely discarded as yet. Although LaChambre did not state that he had discussed subject with Dac Khe his reasoning was very close to that outlined in Embassy's 721.[6] He thought that if Bao Dai were to return it would have to be with understanding that he take active role in government. He mentioned possibility Bao Dai heading government himself with Tam as Minister Interior, Diem as Secretary of State and General Xuan as Minister Defense. He was afraid that without Bao Dai's consolidating influence much time might be lost in futile jockeying for power between politicians and sects.

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[3] Dated Aug. 18, p. 1957.

[4] Regarding telegrams 706 and 710, see footnote 3, *ibid.*

[5] Dated Aug. 20, p. 1964.

[6] Telegram 721 from Paris, Aug. 20, summarizing a conversation between an Embassy officer and Nguyen Dac Khe, a former minister in the Buu Loc government, is not printed. (751G.00/8-2054)

Sainteny leaving for Saigon tomorrow. He had been given precise instructions regarding functions until he assumed duties in Hanoi after the evacuation was finished in October. He was to avoid appearing to be an adjunct of General Ely's office and was to deal only with Control Commission set up by Geneva. French wanted him on the spot before the turnover to the Viet Minh was completed so as to avoid any question of his being accredited to Viet Minh and possible Viet Minh request reciprocate.

We continue to be impressed by LaChambre's energy, reasoning and judgment. He is taking his responsibilities very seriously, thinks hard and comes up with studied unemotional conclusions. He still plans to go to Vietnam as soon as Parliament recesses.

DILLON

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023 Indochina 8–2854

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, August 24, 1954.

Subject: "White Paper" on Indochina

You may recall that in the past you were asked at one or two of your press conferences some details as to what were the facts with reference to requests for, or offers of, U.S. military participation in the Indochina fighting. You replied that you would consider making this information available when this was compatible with the public interest.

As I think I told you, I prepared a memorandum of the facts on this matter, the pertinent portions of which I cabled to our Embassies in London and Paris,[2] which took up the matter with the respective Foreign Offices.

The British came back with four or five minor suggestions which are in the main acceptable. The French Foreign Office merely said that they thought it would be "inopportune" to publish the material until after the conclusion of the EDC debate.[3]

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[1] The source text bears the following handwritten notation: "28 Aug. To Sec. State—Approved: D. E."

[2] See telegram 689 to London, Aug. 3, repeated to Paris as 438, p. 1915.

The result is that as far as the British and French are concerned we would properly be in a position early in September to publish the paper.

I am myself rather disposed to feel that public interest has waned to a point where publication would rather artificially stimulate controversy that has subsided. Therefore, I am inclined to recommend that unless you are again put under pressure in the matter, we should abstain from publication. I thought, however, that you should know that we are in a position as far as the British and French are concerned to publish if you should judge that this was advisable.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[3] The British comments were transmitted in telegram 683 from London, Aug. 7. (751G.00/8–754) In telegram 541 from Paris, Aug. 8, the Embassy reported that Prime Minister Mendès-France felt that the release of the statement would not be timely. (751G.00/8–854) Additional documentation on consultations in London and Paris regarding the possible publication of the statement may be found in file 751G.00.

751G.11/8–2454

Memorandum by the Acting Director of Central Intelligence (Cabell) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

WASHINGTON, August 24, 1954.

Subject: Report on Ngo Dinh Diem

There is attached a report dated 23 August 1954 . . . on Diem and his Government. Although this report is being disseminated through our regular channels, I am forwarding this copy to you because of its pertinence to present policy discussions on Indochina.

C. P. CABELL

[Enclosure]

Central Intelligence Agency Report

SECRET [SAIGON, August 23, 1954.]

POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM

The following . . . . report represents a round-up of information available to representatives of the Departments of Defense, and State and CIA.

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[1] The following handwritten notation by Deputy Assistant Secretary Drumright appears on the source text: "A very interesting paper which is revealing in the light of what has been taking place in Saigon during the past month."

1. Ngo Dinh Diem has assumed governmental responsibility under conditions of greater disadvantage than most of his compatriots would be able to bear. Diem has demonstrated great courage and implacable stubbornness, which he acquired during the period when his character was being molded. He is an uncompromising moralist, nationalist and rebel. In the past, Diem has cooperated with Bao Dai, the French, the Japanese, Ho Chi Minh, various cliques, sects and political parties and has broken with all these elements by his own volition and judgement despite the capacity of each and all of them to do him material damage. The basis of his divergence with all these factions has been his uncompromising stand on complete independence for Vietnam. Diem's present reputation is based on these past actions which are indicative of his self righteousness and single mindedness and which cannot be interpreted as signs of vacillation or lack of character. Diem and Ho Chi Minh are ascetics and zealots, qualities which separate them from the corrupt courtiers of the French and Bao Dai. Without such qualities, there would not be much hope for a future leader in South Vietnam.

2. Diem's present government is composed of a handful of relatives and friends who are individuals Diem believes he can trust. Most of these individuals have good reputations as nationalists and none are disreputable or even suspected of dishonesty. There are few who are competent administrators but it should be remembered that the results of the Geneva Conference and partition have put a premium on nationalist leaders and not on administrators. In addition, many of the best Vietnamese technical experts are tied up in Paris for the duration of current negotiations regarding the transfer of powers. Any realistic assessment of the Diem government must take into account those areas which are within his sphere of action and those which are not. Diem does not have control over finances, the military, customs, immigration, diplomatic representation, the judiciary and police matters or the security forces. These would fall within the rights of an independent state and Vietnam is not independent despite the fact that she has been recognized by the U.S. The transfer of powers from the French to the Vietnamese government, which is now in the discussion stage, offers the French a multitude of opportunities to play off Vietnamese leaders and sects against the Vietnamese government in an effort to obtain the most concessions from the Vietnamese government. Added to these difficulties, the Vietnamese government is frequently embarrassed by French actions to save face.

3. The local nationalist criticism of Diem is based on his failure to acquire immediate and complete independence from France. The continued presence of General Nguyen Van Hinh and the promised return of Bao Dai symbolize this failure. The French criticism of Diem

is believed to stem solely from Diem's failure to concede favored positions administratively and politically to the Confessional Groups in South Vietnam. U.S. criticism of Diem is based on his failure to demonstrate that his government has an administrative capacity which has not been an attribute of previous governments.

4. The basic nature of the problem facing the Vietnamese government regarding its position with the French is amply demonstrated by two statements Mendes-France made after Geneva. Mendes-France said that he had instructed Geneva that he would probably turn over to Diem control in those fields previously reserved for the French. He also said that Geneva was the best possible solution to the Indochina problem as it guaranteed continued French responsibility in Asia.

5. The present spate of rumors that the Diem government is "floundering" and about to resign or be removed is partly caused by the natural psychological letdown. Such stories appear frequently in the French press. The visits of Cheysson, Raphael-Leygues, Guy La Chambre and Buu Hoi present excellent opportunities for all those who desire to unseat Diem or for the French who claim that certain groups desire to see Diem ousted. There is no information substantiating these rumors. Nguyen Van Tam, Tran Van Huu and Hinh are reported to be intriguing with French stimulation, but have few followers and probably cannot agree among themselves. No other groups or individuals are known to be positively opposing Diem at this time.

6. The French position is also amply clear although their policy is supposedly not yet defined. The French do not and will not trust any Vietnamese government which is not headed by individuals under French influence or control. Diem does not meet these requirements. The French undoubtedly fear that Diem is too strong to bow to their wishes and that his government is too weak to protect their citizens or their interests.

7. Diem's chances for remaining in power depend on the whims of Bao Dai and the demands of French policy. Bao Dai can be bought or pressured by the French. The French probably have decided to take a strong stand in South Vietnam and will defend economic and cultural interests as well as trade with the Viet Minh. In order to do this, the French must be able to control or influence the government. Since Bao Dai has the power to make or break the Vietnamese government, the question arises, how much pressure will the French bring to bear on Bao Dai?

8. Diem does have political know-how and is attempting to make bargains on his own terms rather than by bribery with groups and party leaders. Diem has plans to remove or negate the opposition and therefore it appears that the delay in carrying out these plans is a calculated risk he is taking. There has been no evidence of friction within Diem's cabinet or that there are pro-Viet Minh personalities in

it. Diem is aware of inadequacies of some members of his cabinet and the removal of the Minister of Information who showed himself incompetent was an example of this awareness.

9. The French are believed to be actively undermining Diem despite their denials. Present French efforts are confined to maneuvers intended to demonstrate that Diem is incompetent and lacks popular support. However, the role of arbiter of the popularity of any Vietnamese government is hardly a believable one for the French. Similarly, sincere cooperation by the French with any nationalist Vietnamese government is hardly to be expected at this late hour. The most recent example of French insincerity is their promise to evacuate all Vietnamese desiring to leave North Vietnam prior to the Viet Minh take over. The French did not and do not have the capacity to perform this task. This fumbling and incapacity on the part of the French has not been an inspiration or an example to the Vietnamese government, which has far less means but is now subject to severe criticism for its failure to run the evacuation like the Normandy landings in reverse.

10. Local French security precautions, which are extremely obvious and heavy handed, the visits of Raphael-Leygues, Cheysson, Guy La Chambre and Buu Hoi, promises of the return of Bao Dai and the spate of articles criticizing Diem in the French press have all contributed to current rumors that Diem will resign or be ousted. However, Diem will not resign and no candidate to replace him is in sight. While Tam is believed to be the French choice, he would receive far less support than Diem in Vietnamese circles. Some confessional leaders and Tam's son, General Hinh, would probably support him which would alienate the majority of the politically conscious population of South and Central Vietnam.

11. The attitude of some of the nationalists and confessional leaders toward Diem depend on his progress toward independence and pacification of South and Central Vietnam. Some leaders are probably withholding their support awaiting to be paid off. Bao Dai, Pham Cong Tac and Colonel Trinh Minh The have openly declared their support for Diem. The idea of a coalition government between the Confessional Groups and Diem is superficially attractive but it is probably not workable under present conditions with so many pressures working from various sides.

751G.00/8–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, August 24, 1954—11 p. m.

721. Repeated information priority Paris 240, Hanoi unnumbered. General Ely returned this morning and I saw him this afternoon.

Ely said he wanted to discuss at length four matters, viz: (A) French policy toward remaining Vietnam; (B) scope of Sainteny's representation in north; (C) question of American aid to Vietnam; and (D) political situation in Vietnam.

(A) Ely reminded me he had gone to Paris to inform Government that he would not remain on as Commissioner General unless France followed unswervingly policy of complete independence for remaining Vietnam and complete support of its efforts to avoid Communist domination. He had told Mendes-France he could not represent "double game (double jeu)" of playing both with Viet Minh and southern government with idea of eventually backing one that came out on top. Ely said at first Mendes-France seemed disposed to adopt "special policy" vis-à-vis Viet Minh but he dropped that idea and gave Ely unqualified assurance of loyal and single support of remaining Vietnam. Ely then went on to say that, while there was to be no doubt of independence, in parlous political state in Vietnam, France and US would be obliged to give very firm advice to keep country from falling apart. Such advice would not be infringement of its internal sovereignty.

(B) Mendes-France had agreed that it had been mistake to give Sainteny title of Delegate General to North Vietnam, but since title had been published, it was impossible to change it. Ely then let me read instruction to Sainteny which had been drafted in conference between Guy la Chambre, Ely, and Sainteny, and later approved by Mendes-France. Instruction provided that Sainteny until evacuation of Hanoi completed was to be under Commissioner General. Thereafter he would be independent but his function in North Vietnam would be consular and not political or diplomatic. Sainteny was to make clear in public statements that his appointment in no way constituted recognition of Viet Minh regime. His duties were to protect French economic and cultural interests. His first duty would be to take census of all French economic enterprises and determine what assurances they would require from Viet Minh regime to continue in business. His second duty was to restart French educational institutions, including Hanoi Faculty of Medicine. Although his functions would remain consular, he was entitled to approach Central Viet Minh Government to insure protection of French cultural and economic interests. Sainteny would arrive in Saigon end of week and proceed immediately for three days stay in Hanoi and Haiphong, where he would contact representatives of French interests there. He was not to contact Viet Minh authorities, and specifically should have no communication with Ho Chi Minh, during this first visit. He would thereafter return to Saigon for brief stay, where he would prepare his initial report and recommendations. On his return here, Ely said, Sainteny would be instructed to call on me and inform me of his findings and recommendations.

(C) Ely then let me read a French translation of Secretary's letter of August 19[1] to Mendes-France and then informed me of suggestions he and Minister La Chambre had made to Mendes-France re a reply. Their suggestions were: (1) That proposed letter of President to Ngo Dinh Diem be carefully phrased not to imply personal and permanent approval of Ngo Dinh Diem concerning whose capacity to form solid government both Ely and La Chambre entertained gravest doubts; (2) objection to proposed discontinuance of present practice of funneling budgetary aid through French and suggestion matter be studied in Saigon and effort made to find some "joint arrangements" for passing on such aid; (3) insistence on necessity of continued American budgetary support of French expeditionary force on ground latter was not acting in selfish national interest but was in effect a free world guard; (4) approval suggestion of American participation in training of Vietnamese national army but pointing out that armistice provisions would prevent sending more American personnel than were present in Vietnam at effective date of armistice; suggestion that present personnel now assigned for end-use inspections be rotated out and replaced by training personnel; (5) objection to sending American training mission to Cambodia at present time on ground such action, while not specifically provided against in armistice, would be interpreted by Viet Minh and others as looking toward setting up foreign military base in Cambodia which armistice forbids.

Comment: I told Ely question of whether present American budgetary aid to expeditionary force were to continue would of course have to be decided between Washington and Paris, remarking that as far as I knew there had been no budget submitted as to peace time costs of expeditionary force in Indochina. Question of whether budgetary aid to Vietnam would be direct would also have to be decided at high level, but it might be useful also to have discussions here and idea of joint arrangements to pass on such aid was worth exploring. I remarked that in any case whether it was given direct or passed through French as heretofore we would certainly have to have voice in disposition of foreign exchange which would be created by such support. Our Congress and public opinion would never allow "exchange deals" and inordinate transfers such as Bao Dai and other individuals had practiced.

(D) Ely said he had just completed a long meeting with his principal advisers as to political situation. He and his advisers here were unanimously of opinion that return of Bao Dai to Vietnam at this time would be unmitigated political calamity. Bao Dai was intelligent but lazy and could not be expected to exert selfless leadership and set example which this situation required. His advisers here were also firmly of opinion that much plotted project of installing military regime with Hinh at head would equally be mistake. They not only doubt character and efficiency of such regime but it was certain Hinh would soon be overthrown by another military coup and so on ad infinitum.

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[1] See telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, p. 1957.

There was general agreement, he said, that Ngo Dinh Diem regime was dangerously inefficient and change of some sort for better must be made very quickly. He doubted Diem could reshuffle his Cabinet to come up with something effective but he was keeping his mind open until he had chance to talk with Diem. On other hand, none of his advisers was able to come up with suggestion of desirable successor for Ngo Dinh Diem. Tam should have post of Interior (police) in any new or reshuffled Cabinet, but it was doubtful he could effectively preside a government. Ely also mentioned Huu. Ely asked my ideas.

I replied that, while admitting weaknesses of Diem's regime, I saw no one that could replace him. It seemed clear to me that any government must be headed by known Nationalist, but there was no other capable Nationalist in sight. It seemed to me that only thing to do would be for French and Americans to "weigh in" with urgent suggestions to Ngo Dinh Diem that he must strengthen his government. In any case, I said he should have completely frank talk with Diem at earliest opportunity and I would appreciate being informed promptly of results of that conversation. I remarked that Diem had made certain progress in sense that he had prevented his wilder eyed followers from staging manifestations against French following armistice. Ely admitted this was true, that some very harmful incidents might otherwise have occurred. I said that Diem had placed Chieu, an efficient man, in charge of all foreign aid and latter seemed to be doing a good job, and he had delegated Chieu sufficient powers to carry out economic reforms. I observed also that after several trials and delays Diem finally had appointed Doi[2] with full powers to carry through evacuation and resettlement and we hoped this man would achieve results. Ely said, however, that Diem was increasingly "discredited" in France and on his return here he had found he was largely discredited within Vietnam. Diem had taken office at time of defeat of Vietnam and was considered by Vietnamese as "unlucky". Ely said he wanted to discuss matter further with me but something had to be done quickly to better political situation.

Reverting to Ely's mention of Huu, I said that latter had obviously discredited himself with his public statements calling for collaboration, if indeed not coalition, with Viet Minh. Ely said he was uninformed as to Huu's statements and sorry to learn he had made them.

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[2] Ngo Ngoc Doi.

HEATH

751G.00/8–2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 26, 1954—10 p. m.

751. Repeated information Paris 248. Raphael-Leygues had cocktail party yesterday afternoon at 5:30 p. m. When I arrived purposely late at about 6:30 p. m. I found that so-called "cocktail party" was instead full dress meeting of chief plotters among confessional groups and air of conspiracy was thick. Group included such personnages as Cao Dai Pope, General Soai of the Hoa Hao, political counselor of Binh Xuyen, [name deleted], Ung An of the Imperial Cabinet and the ubiquitous Tran Van An. Also present was General Hinh who, although he must have known that I was coming, appeared somewhat embarrassed, as he should have been, to be found in such company.

Only outsiders present were two Embassy officers and myself, Daridan and Dannaud. In conversation with Embassy First Secretary, [name deleted] who is described as member of "secret steering committee" of conspiratorial group, came directly to point enquiring "is it all right to go ahead and change the government?" [Name deleted] conversation brought forth usual picture of ineptness, incompetence and nepotism of Diem government, fear that free Vietnam would be lost to Communists within six months unless strong clear nationalist leadership provided and indication confessional groups had reached large measure of accord on immediate future policy.

. . . gave following clear indications: (1) Confessional groups are progressing swiftly in their plans and may well be closer to day of action than had been anticipated; (2) Diem, with his gift for alienating people even those who would wish to aid him, had spurned approaches from confessional groups and previously reported negotiations with sects by Diem and Tran Van Do had not been negotiations at all as Diem's representatives had been obscure and inept and no practical political concessions or accommodations had been proffered; (3) sects would still not refuse cooperate with Diem even at this late hour if practical political arrangement could be reached with him and his government broadened to include representation of sects. [Name deleted] was frankly skeptical Diem capable of working with such coalition but stated explicitly confessional groups willing to try if their interests recognized and protected and their voices listened to in "reasonable" measure; (4) [name deleted] agreed any Prime

Minister who hoped give leadership and stable government free Vietnam must be nationalist, honest, and preferably have some personal political support. He said such man exists and when chided that this was line taken by all opponents of Diem but that names were never produced, replied that for reasons of secrecy name could not be disclosed but that such a man, although not Cochin Chinese, does in fact exist with all these qualities and will be produced at proper time.

Cocktail party, although theatrical in its atmosphere and obvious manner in which it was staged, did serve to show remarkable degree of harmony among leaders of confessional groups. It is clear that moment when they will be prepared to act is not far off, perhaps within few days, and could possibly be triggered by untoward or sudden movement by Diem, such as hasty effort to dismiss Hinh without prior planning and securing understanding or at least benevolent neutrality of French. Perhaps most significant clue produced was comment by [name deleted] that sects had not completely abandoned willingness negotiate with Diem on reasonable terms provided Diem's brothers were removed from scene, government was broadened, interests of confessional groups appropriately protected and firm anti-Communist program launched.

Raphael-Leygues, who with Buu Hoi was understood to have come to Vietnam in order give objective picture of political situation to Mendes-France, seems to be spending most of his time busily consorting with if not abetting confessional group conspirators.

HEATH

751G.00/8-2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, August 26, 1954—8 p. m.

758. Repeated information Paris 252 Hanoi unnumbered. I spoke with Bordaz, Second Deputy French ComGen about political problems in Vietnam this morning and this afternoon Diem called me in to speak of his problems.

Bordaz came to see me to urge that we form a joint group to discuss coordinating French and American plans for economic assistance to Vietnam and also for joint study of problem of direct American military budgetary support for Vietnam. I agreed that both matters might usefully be discussed here but that latter question would have to be solved in talks between Washington and Paris.

Bordaz then took up question of internal political problem. He said Ely would send for me this evening to discuss this problem which perplexed and preoccupied him. If I had any preliminary ideas, it might be useful for him to convey them to Ely in advance of our talk.

Bordaz took line that Diem was not up to task of forming solid government with firm support in remaining Vietnam. Tam would probably be best man to take over in this disintegrating situation but French realized that Tam was too widely considered as pro-French to preside [over] a supposedly Nationalist Government. Tam was good policeman and should serve as Minister of Interior in any successor government. French were rather inclined to favor Huu. Bordaz asserted that Huu's flirtations with Viet Minh and his unfortunate declarations apparently favoring *modus vivendi* with Viet Minh, if not Coalition Government, were not to be taken seriously. He asked my ideas.

I said that, while Tam had real ability and probably better than anyone else could organize police work against Viet Minh infiltration, fact of his being French citizen and pro-French would make his government easy target for Viet Minh propaganda and he would not gain support of Nationalists. Nevertheless, if Diem clearly demonstrated incapacity to organize a solid, supported governmental structure, it might be necessary to have recourse to Tam. As for Huu, he was open to same objections as Tam. In addition, he was poor administrator and would never appreciate extent of communist menace which was main problem of remaining Vietnam. For more than two years Huu had failed to see that Communist China presented any particular menace.

I thoroughly realized shortcomings of Diem but I saw no other possibility at present time than to give him another chance. I said I thought General Ely and I, separately, should insist that Diem should come up immediately with revised cabinet of effective ministers drawn mainly from south and that we should urge on him to come to terms with sects and resign himself to political facts which required formation of Coalition Government including them. If Diem took these measures then our influence should be exerted on sects to play along with him. If he failed to take such measures, he could hardly expect support against his opposition.

Diem sent for me early this afternoon. I told him frankly his government was in extremely parlous situation and as a friend urged him to come to terms with sects without further delay. He would have to offer more concessions than he had previously done. He would not get their support by merely offering them a substantial but minority representation in a provisional national assembly which had not even been formed. I further told him that certain of his followers had done his government great disservice in indulging in public irrational criticism of French. I could well understand patriotic Vietnamese still harboring rancour against French for their former colonial domination of Vietnam, but statements and actions of these supporters had given impression in France and abroad that his regime was more incensed against French than they were against communists. Fact of matter was that until Vietnamese Army could be reorganized, which could not be accomplished overnight, into something solid, Vietnam required presence of French expeditionary force to prevent a military vacuum into which Viet Minh would very quickly move. Vietnam also needed French economic aid. Therefore, it was up to his government to convince Ely that they respected legitimate French cultural and economic rights in this country and were prepared to work loyally with French.

Diem then brought up question of General Hinh. He said he was not far from agreement with Cao Daists and with at least one branch of Hoa Hao. Colonel Ngo of latter sect was personally devoted to Diem. One thing that prevented real agreement was that as long as Hinh remained in direct command of Vietnamese National Army Diem could never come to any final agreement with sects. Sects were not in favor of General Hinh and distrusted him but were quite willing to work with him to preserve their present privileges as long as Hinh retained practically independent command of National Army. If he were removed from that direct command, sects would come to terms.

I then said he would have to be prepared both to document Hinh's insubordination and its consequence very clearly to General Ely and way would have to be found to save Hinh's face while still removing him from direct control of troops. Hinh was fellow French officer of General Ely's and it would be very difficult for latter to take action against him. As regards suggestion that Hinh be urged to visit States at this time, my government saw certain objections thereto under present circumstances. If by agreement with General Ely Diem could reorganize Vietnamese Armed Forces and boost Hinh upwards and aside to be chairman of Joint Chiefs, perhaps giving him another star, this might be a solution. I suggested Diem should have very frank talk with Ely without further delay. Diem said his brother Luyen, who was present at interview, was seeing Ely this afternoon on this matter. I said it was indispensable for Diem to talk personally with Ely, but finally agreed that Luyen might present these ideas to Ely and give latter chance to consider them before final discussions with Diem.

I said further to Diem it would be necessary for him to get more Southern representation in his reshuffled Cabinet. Diem gave stock reply that eight of ministerial portfolios in present Cabinet were held by Cochin Chinese. I said that in my opinion that was not enough since practically all that was left of Vietnam, except thinly populated center, was Cochin China.

HEATH

751H.00/8–2654 : Telegram

The Chargé in Cambodia (Goodman) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, August 26, 1954—6 p. m.

89. Sent Saigon 106, repeated information Paris 81, Bangkok unnumbered. Prime Minister Penn Nouth told me government delivered to Control Commission Chief General Singh documented protest, signed by Defense and Interior Ministers, against Viet Minh failure disarm Khmer Viet Minh by July 23 (Embtel 84 to Department).[1]

Premier said he now thoroughly disabused concerning Viet Minh obfuscations on Mixed Commission and realizes Communists will try take every advantage of truce terms and of development situation. Thus, although no great security problem remaining Cambodia, his representatives will now minutely examine every item, and government will let nothing pass without protest or appropriate action.

This indicates continuation characteristic Cambodian approach—so well demonstrated by "royal crusade" for independence and at Geneva—recently described to me by National Police Chief Viriya as always "playing last card", and, in spite of well-rounded concern of Chief, French Military Mission with malevolence Viet Minh intentions (Embtel 76 to Department),[2] Cambodians aware of problem and doing best to be tough-minded and alert.

However, officials here increasingly discuss their concern about possibility Communist takeover all Vietnam, and consequent danger Cambodia. Although some hotheads like say no concern of theirs what happens to Vietnam thoughtful ones including most important leaders, express hope SEATO guarantee will cover not only frontiers Cambodia but also Vietnam, and obvious idea has several times been presented to me that ultimate defense Cambodia and Thailand enormously facilitated by firm control entire southern portion Indochina peninsula, with worried corollary that loss southern Vietnam might make effective defense Cambodia impossible. Thus I have received number of queries about whether US would effectively back southern Vietnamese.

GOODMAN

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[1] Telegram 84 from Phnom Penh, Aug. 23, is not printed. (751H.00/8–2354)

[2] Telegram 76 from Phnom Penh, Aug. 19, is not printed. (751G.00/8–1954)

751G.00/8–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, August 27, 1954—noon.

759. Repeated information Paris 253, Hanoi unnumbered. Plot to get Ngo Dinh Diem and his government out of office is practically completed and operations for its execution would probably have started if I had not stated very firmly to General Ely and his Deputy Bordaz

yesterday evening that Diem must be given another chance to come to terms with sects and set up a capable government.

It would be more correct to say there are two plots against Diem's government. There is the plot of sects with the more than tacit connivance of General Hinh. Sects are determined it will not be Hinh that heads this new government. Cao Daists say they have some unknown in mind (see Embassy's telegram 752, August 26) [1] but it is likely there is no firm agreement between sects as to who would head new regime. General Tran Van Soai has asked to see General Ely this morning in name of all sects, presumably to demand his "benevolent neutrality" in move against Diem. *Modus operandi* of sects would be to stir up "popular demonstrations" calling for retirement of Diem government. Following these demonstrations, sects would ask Diem to resign. If latter refused, Bao Dai, who has already been informed or rather approached by Binh Xuyen, would be asked to terminate Diem government.

French, however, have somewhat separate plan. It is that new government should have Nguyen Van Tam as Minister of Interior and Tran Van Huu as President of Council. Ely very frankly, to say the least, exposed this plan to me last night. Real choice of French to head new government would be Tam, except for fact he is unanimously considered as Francophile throughout Vietnam and, while an excellent policeman, lacks intellectual breadth to function as Prime Minister. Ely said to me rather cynically that they would favor Tam in spite of these disadvantages were it not for unfavorable reaction his choice would provoke in US—and other countries. Therefore, French choice was Huu. In view of Huu's antipathy toward Tam and anti-French stand of latter during latter part of his Prime Ministership and afterwards, this combination, Ely argued, would indicate to country and world that it was government of national union. I said I did not see how Huu could satisfy nationalist anti-Communist sentiment in Vietnam and abroad as long as his public declarations in favor of working with Viet Minh remained uncorrected. I pointed out that Hoa Haos, Cao Daists, and Binh Xuyen had all made public declarations against Huu's candidacy. I added that Huu as administrator had been very deficient. For example, his information service was least effective and least persuasive of all the bad information services that characterized preceding and succeeding Vietnamese Governments. He had refused to publish budget. While I did not believe he had ever personally appropriated government funds to his own purse, he had made a great deal of money as his "cut" of gambling concession and had displayed very tepid interest in attempts to repress graft in his administration.

Ely finally said he would be willing to give Diem another chance but only on condition that Diem would take Tam into his Cabinet as Minister of Interior. I said I doubted that without pressure either Diem would agree to name Tam or Tam would agree to accept secondary role in a Diem cabinet. I further said if Tam came into Cabinet and his son Hinh also remained in command army, it would be a very difficult and bitter pill for Diem to swallow, since Hinh for months had been agitating for formation of a military regime, with himself as its head, and latterly had been at least in conversational contact with sects looking toward ouster of Diem government. Ely said that as regards further French support of Diem, latter's acceptance of Tam was *sine qua non.* Perhaps Hinh could be "limoge" (put on side lines). That would not be too difficult since Hinh was junior French officer although enjoying temporary high rank in Vietnamese National Army.

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[1] Telegram 752 from Saigon, Aug. 26, containing information on the position of the Cao Dai sect, is not printed. (751G.00/8–2754)

Ely went on to say that in agreeing to permit Diem to have another chance he would be going against his instructions from Paris since "France" was determined that Diem government was entirely inefficient, and "unlucky" as well, must go. Ely said, as he had said before, that it was all same to him whether Vietnamese Government was anti-French or pro-French. His criterion was government must be efficient and he had that afternoon told Luyen, Diem's brother, that it had been most incapable government Vietnam had ever had.

HEATH

751G.00/8–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, August 27, 1954—4 p. m.

761. Repeated information Paris 254, Hanoi unnumbered. My telegrams 758 August 26 and 759 August 27. We are faced with a real dilemma. French and Vietnamese criticisms of inefficiency and political ineptitude of Diem are unfortunately all too valid. I am by no means persuaded that even if Diem buys French idea of taking Tam in as policeman of his government (and latter accepts); that if Diem came to terms with sects as result of French and our pressure on him and our possible influence on sects; or that if he took away direct command of army from General Hinh, he would be able to build a solid, effective regime. Diem still has reputation for honesty and patriotism. However, he seems scarcely capable of influencing people, making friends, or undertaking determined action. He seems to dwell in an ivory tower in company with his belief in "his mission", leaving urgent political negotiations largely in hands of his brothers; "gets in everybody's hair"; or entrusts to well meaning, intelligent, but not dynamic people like Tran Van Do. While he retains some prestige among non-political elements, he has largely lost whatever support he

enjoyed among Vietnamese political groups, with exception of certain, but by no means all, Catholic groups. He may have some support in center and possibly in north, but the northerners have no influence at present in remaining Vietnam. He seems not to realize that through his own ineptness, lack of action and positive gift for alienating even those who wish to assist him, number of his supporters has dwindled away.

On other hand, no successor government that we can envisage at this time would have any real appeal to nationalist or anti-Communist sentiment. While another government based on candidates who appear to be at hand, including Tam as Minister of Interior, might build up a strong police authority, it would not be an authority that would be completely effective against Viet Minh infiltration nor able to create any general popular support. I am also far from convinced that in spite of his activity and cleverness, Hinh could build up a popular disciplined national army.

We must hope that, perhaps out of a national assembly, some real leader will develop, but this possibility is somewhat far in the uncertain future and there is no time to be lost.

Practically, we must support Diem vis-à-vis the French and the sects, as an interim measure, but I am far from sanguine that his defects of personality and performance will enable him to make effective use of this opportunity. Meanwhile, we must keep our eyes open for another leader.

In light of above, I recommend that proposed message from President to Diem (Deptel 636) [1] be held in abeyance.

HEATH

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[1] For telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, repeated to Saigon as telegram 636, see p. 1957.

751G.00/8–2754

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Western European Affairs (Tyler)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] August 27, 1954.

Subject: Visit of the French Ambassador with The Acting Secretary of State.

Participants: The Acting Secretary of State
Ambassador Bonnet, French Embassy
Mr. Pierre Millet, Counselor of the French Embassy
Mr. Livingston T. Merchant, Assistant Secretary of State
Mr. Tyler, WE

The Ambassador called, at his own request, on the Acting Secretary of State. He said that he had received from his Government some comments on the letter which the Secretary of State had sent to Mr. Mendes-France, concerning Vietnam.[1] In general, the French Government is gratified that the Vietnamese should be considered by the U.S. as an independent government and that the importance of that country should be recognized by the fact that a letter was to be sent by the President of the United States to the Vietnamese Prime Minister. The French Government expressed its hope that the letter would be addressed not so much to Mr. Diem as an individual, but to the Prime Minister, as the head of the Vietnamese Government. The reason for this suggestion was that reports received from Saigon made it clear that Diem is not gaining in authority, and that support for him among the people of Southern Vietnam is decreasing daily. The Ambassador said he believed that reports of a similar nature had been received by the Department of State from US officials in that area. It therefore seemed possible that Diem would not last very long and it would therefore be preferable not to appear to raise his prestige at this time by anything resembling personal support.

The French Government had noted with some surprise that there had been no mention of the French Expeditionary Corps in the text of the letter to Diem. While the French Government understood that matters concerning support of the French Expeditionary Corps were subject to bilateral arrangements and discussions between the U.S. and France, omission of any reference to the F.E.C. in the text of the letter seemed a little surprising. The Ambassador went on to say that the French Government felt that it would be very important that U.S. military aid to the Vietnamese Armed Forces should not be carried out in such a way as to imperil the armistice agreement, or so as to permit misuse of equipment. The French Government wished to suggest that there be constituted in Saigon a tripartite military group, including the Vietnamese, the French, and the U.S., whereby the study and control of the distribution of military aid could be effected.

The Ambassador then turned to the question of the training of Vietnamese troops by the U.S. He said that his Government appreciated and welcomes U.S. participation in this field, and General Ely had reached very good understanding with General O'Daniel as to what was required. The French Government nevertheless wished to emphasize the precaution necessary in order that no pretext be given to the Communists to claim that the armistice agreement had been violated. It would thus be dangerous to try to replace U.S. administrative personnel by military instructors, as this would at once become known.

Turning to Cambodia, he said that in order to prevent possible accusations of breach of the armistice, the French Government felt that it would be desirable that Cambodian troops should continue to be treated [*trained*] by the French instructors already there, so far as possible. If there were a sudden influx of U.S. military instructors this would possibly create a difficult situation in view of the functions of the International Advisory Commission.

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[1] See telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, p. 1957.

The Acting Secretary of State told the Ambassador that the French Government's comments would be taken into consideration and that he thought it would be useful to have the points written down in an *Aide-Mémoire.*[2] He commented that particularly with regard to training, the U.S. had certain definite ideas. Very considerable sums of money and the prestige of the U.S. were involved and we would have to be sure that our aid was applied in a way likely to enable us to achieve our aims. We would therefore have to look very closely at the problems involved.

The Ambassador then turned briefly to the matter of the EDC and said that the chances of ratification were obviously poor. He added that he hoped that even if EDC were defeated, this would not mean that the U.S. would look for a solution of the problem without the participation of France. The Acting Secretary emphasized the gravity of the decision before the French Assembly and said he wondered whether the French Government realized the significance of the decision which was about to be taken. He added that if the EDC were defeated, this would undoubtedly bring about a very fundamental re-assessment of the situation, and of its strategic implications, by the U.S.

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[2] Later on Aug. 27, the French Embassy provided the Department of State with an *aide-mémoire* setting forth the points which had been made by Ambassador Bonnet. (PSA files, lot 54 D 190, "Indochina") An informal translation of that *aide-mémoire* was sent to Paris in telegram 737 of Aug. 28, which was also sent to Saigon, Phnom Penh, Hanoi, Vientiane, and London. (751G.00/8-2854)

751G.00/8-2754 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, August 28, 1954—11:40 a. m.

733. Department profoundly disturbed at general trend of developments set forth Saigon telegrams 751, 752, 753, 758 and 759.[2] Department generally approves views expressed by Ambassador Heath to Ely and commends him for prompt forthright expression thereof.

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[1] Drafted by Bonsal of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as priority telegram 811.

[2] For telegram 751 of Aug. 26. see p. 1984; regarding telegram 752 of Aug. 26, see footnote 1, p. 1989; telegram 753 of Aug. 26 is not printed; for telegram 758 of Aug. 26, see p. 1985; and for telegram 759, Aug. 27, see p. 1988.

Department requests Ambassador Dillon express orally following views to Mendes-France or LaChambre:

"Department of State deeply disturbed at reports that French authorities in Indochina apparently actively encouraging change of government there. Such activities contradict repeated assertions by Mendes-France and LaChambre regarding independence of Vietnam. If carried out such projects will destroy confidence Vietnamese in their true independence. Department trusts reports do not reflect French Government's intentions."

Ambassador Heath authorized to make similar statement to Ely. In addition Heath may make known to appropriate Vietnamese as well as to Ely that while US Govt. respects right of Vietnamese to select their own leaders, choice of a person such as Huu identified with idea of coalition government with Vietminh would make it impossible for us to request US Congress for assistance to free Vietnamese Government which we desire to render.

Department fully concurs with Heath's statements to Diem regarding need for broadening base and improving efficiency his government. In addition to arrangements with sects which Diem apparently believes to be politically necessary and desirable, it would be Department's hope that he would give favorable consideration to bringing into government other persons of proven ability and patriotism. Department cannot judge from here regarding availability such persons as Quat, Huyen, Buu Loc, and perhaps even Tam.

In discussing activities of sects with their representatives or with other Vietnamese Heath authorized to state that *coup d'état* against Diem would produce most unfortunate effect in US including serious doubts as to stability and prospects of free Vietnam and that it is our confident hope that patriotic Vietnamese will find peaceful means of adapting their government to needs and objectives of present situation through cooperation of all constructive elements determined to see that Vietnam remains free. US desires most earnestly to cooperate with those elements.

W[ALTER] B. S[MITH]

751G.00/8-2954: Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, August 29, 1954—4 p. m.

795. Repeated information Paris 267, Hanoi 217. Sainteny called on me last night. He leaves today for a week in Hanoi where he will take sort of census of French commercial colony's needs and intentions and then return to Paris via Saigon to report to Mendes-France. He

will not see Ho Chi Minh during this first visit. He described his mission as purely consular to protect French commercial and cultural interests in Tonkin.

I told him of our intention to maintain our consulate there and he said he was glad to hear it. Sainteny said he had no idea what attitude of Viet Minh would be toward foreign consulates but would pass on to Cameron anything he picked up. His own belief was that at beginning Viet Minh would raise no difficulties about consulates but thought it likely Viet Minh might later demand reciprocal rights to open "consulates" in US and England.

Sainteny is attractive, intelligent man who gives impression that he is an idealist and enthusiast. General Ely fears and I am inclined to share his fears, that after a time Sainteny will weary of an inactive consular role and endeavor to promote policy of *rapprochement* or influencing Viet Minh. Ely tells me he would be much happier if Paris had sent a "stupid type of consular officer" rather than man of Sainteny's active stripe.

HEATH

751G.00/8–2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, August 29, 1954—5 p. m.

796. Repeated information Paris 268. Reference Embassy telegram 794, August 29.[1] General Hinh came to see me this morning at my request. He launched into long justification of movement of sects and himself against Diem regime which, he said, because of its incapacity, largely due to Diem's inveterate suspicion of everyone except small group of personal friends and supporters, was disorganizing country. I asked him what was his solution. He replied there were several possible solutions, "the last of which would be new government under titular authority of Diem". He said he had come rather reluctantly to conclusion that last solution was best, although it was a "bourgeois" solution, whereas complete change of regime would provide salutary revolutionary shock to Vietnamese people. He said he had told Diem if he could designate men for seven or eight of Cabinet posts, he might be willing support him. Diem had replied if his candidates were better than those now in office, he would accept them. Hinh was to meet with Luyen and discuss matter this evening.

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[1] In telegram 794, not printed, Ambassador Heath reported on a conversation with General Ely on the evening of Aug. 28 concerning the political situation. Ely had asked Heath to see both General Hinh and Tran Van An (a nationalist with connections with the Binh Xuyen) to point out the dangers and disadvantages of their plot to overthrow the Diem government. (751G.00/8–2954)

I told Hinh that overthrow of Diem government by force would cause very unfavorable impression in US and elsewhere and obviously the solution was to come to amicable coalition arrangement with Diem. Hinh then asked what would be attitude of US if Diem refused reasonable proposal of this sort. I said I did not believe he would refuse and Hinh should be able formulate persuasive proposal. I said I had no desire to intervene in any internal political discussions but would be glad to be informed of results of his talk with Luyen. I told him I was sure my government was prepared to continue its present substantial aid program, but obviously could not do so unless there were honest, progressive, popular government capable of effectively utilizing such aid. Hinh protested new government would meet these qualifications. For one thing, sects were determined to put immediately into effect real agrarian reform which Diem was reluctant to undertake. I remarked I had no idea whether our aid program would be through French as heretofore or direct, but I felt certain my government would wish to see what was being done with large amount of foreign exchange which our aid would generate. There should be no recurrence of irregular transactions in foreign exchange and payments to sects or individuals should not be made by giving them permits to transfer money abroad or permits to export rice.

General Hinh said if he and sects came to terms with Diem, it would still be necessary to stage a "monster popular demonstration" to provide necessary "political shock". But in this event "the people" would demonstrate in favor of new Diem Government instead of against Diem.

Hinh was nervous throughout our talk and did not seem overconfident. He observed in conclusion he thought new regime could beat Viet Minh infiltration. His orders to his officers were when they found a Communist leader to forget Geneva accords and kill him quietly and immediately.

I informed Ely briefly of my talk with Hinh before former left for Dalat. Ely said he was relieved to hear of Hinh's professed intentions to come to amicable agreement with Diem. He said he had recent intelligence that sects and Hinh were not in quite as close agreement as they had been two days ago. Nevertheless, danger still existed they would suddenly provoke "popular demonstration" and force Diem to resign. He also remarked that he was informing Paris idea of coalition government presided over by ex-Premier Huu was impracticable and undesirable in view of latter's public declarations favoring *rapprochement* with Viet Minh.

He again urged me talk to Tran Van An.

HEATH

751G.00/8–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, August 30, 1954—2 p. m.

873. Repeated information Saigon 94. Pass FOA.

1. In view current overriding preoccupation Mendes with EDC debate, we expressed to LaChambre this morning Dept's views along lines indicated Deptel 733.[1] Inasmuch as we had just discussed this general subject with LaChambre together with Sen. Mansfield, LaChambre's views this regard substantially those indicated Embtel 849,[2] i.e., French Govt feels change in near future indispensable, however, they determined not pull strings or try force any Vietnamese Govt out of office or into being. He said they expecting report from Ely this general subject end of this week. Ely's most recent report, he said, indicated only that he thought it undesirable for Bao Dai return at this time. LaChambre stated he understood Bao Dai did not now intend return Vietnam Sept. 2 as had been announced by press, and that he (LaChambre) thought that Bao Dai would listen to advice he currently receiving counseling against returning Vietnam. LaChambre said he had nothing to add regarding who might be Diem's successor in event a change occurred. He felt Tam at minimum ought be Min of Interior in any Vietnamese Govt in order counter Vietminh pressures. He said that he had just had conversation with Col. Leroy who favored Tran Van Huu. When queried about Huu's position at Geneva on Vietminh, LaChambre came Huu's defense saying that Tran Van Do had first approached Vietminh (Dong) and that Huu had not seen Dong until some 48 hours later. This general connection, he added Buu Hoi enroute Paris and said he hoped there would be no difficulty re his visa since this might have unfortunate consequences, with which we agreed.

2. We took this occasion inform LaChambre (per Deptel 730)[3] that Secretary's letter did not address itself to question continuation US budgetary support expeditionary corps, and made clear this open question at present.

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[1] Dated Aug. 28, p. 1993.

[2] Telegram 849 from Paris, Aug. 28, summarizing a discussion between Senator Mike Mansfield of the Foreign Relations Committee, Minister for the Associated States La Chambre, and Ambassador Dillon, is not printed. (751G.00/8–2854) Senator Mansfield was in Paris in connection with a study mission on Indochina. His report was submitted on Oct. 15, 1954, as *Report on Indochina: Report of Senator Mike Mansfield on a Study Mission to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos.* Committee Print, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 83d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1954) The report urged that the United States continue to support the Diem government.

[3] In telegram 730 to Paris, Aug. 27, not printed, the Embassy was informed that the question of U.S. budgetary support for the French Expeditionary Corps in Indochina was still under study. (751G.00/8–2554)

3. Inasmuch as Deptel 737[4] transmitting translation French *aide-mémoire* received prior taking action Deptel 730, and since LaChambre asked if we had received copy *aide-mémoire*, we predicated our request for info re current French thinking on size expeditionary corps to be left [garble] para 2(A) *aide-mémoire*. We asked whether para 2(A) to be construed as request for continuation budgetary support expeditionary corps, stating that if so, it would be necessary that we be informed re French thinking as to level expeditionary corps to be left IC and related data. We said that Emb econ and USOM/F reps would indicate similar reaction French econ authorities concerned and that we would inform FonOff our expression this regard (MAAG will also talk to Min Defense). This connection, we preferred predicate our request for data re expeditionary corps on *aide-mémoire* since it would appear as logical reaction to an apparent official French request for continuation US budgetary support and less like we taking initiative in absence official French communication this subject.

LaChambre said he would endeavor obtain this data for US soon as possible. He added that Ely's initial thinking was that present approximate strength expeditionary corps of 180.000 men would be gradually reduced to about 150,000 by end CY 1954, and to 100,000 by end CY 1955. At same time, compensating increase would be effected Vietnamese National Army which presently totals about 155,000 men.

This connection, LaChambre took occasion to emphasize necessity adopting joint Franco-US approach to econ and technical assistance Assoc States IC. As we indicated to Lavaill August 27 (Embtel 825),[5] we said this problem under discussion Saigon and Washington and we not in position discuss.

4. We also pointed out to LaChambre that statement para C *aide-mémoire* to effect French legal advice considered it out of question under cessation hostilities agreement to replace MAAG administrative personnel with training personnel, ran counter views he expressed to US and Sen Mansfield as reported Embtel 849. LaChambre acknowledged discrepancy and said that while he and Ely considered such replacement desirable, legal adviser FonOff had taken opposing position and that this had been one incorporated *aide-mémoire*. LaChambre then said that he thought possibility could be explored of sending Vietnamese cadres to Korea or Philippines for training as alternate solution, and said that he would ask his people take up with FonOff legal adviser this and other possibilities.

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[4] See footnote 2 to the memorandum of conversation by Tyler, p. 1993.

[5] Telegram 825 from Paris, Aug. 27, summarizing a conversation with Henri Lavaill, Chief of the French Economic and Technical Cooperation Mission at Saigon, is not printed. (751G.5 MSP/8–2754)

5. LaChambre said he leaving Paris for Saigon enroute Philippines (SEATO) September 2.

DILLON

751G.00/8–3154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, August 31, 1954—midnight.

842. Repeated information Paris 285, Manila 111, Hanoi unnumbered. Diem sent for me this morning and I had a two hour talk with him. He asked me to see General Bay Vien of Binh Xuyen, Cao Dais, and possibly Hoa Haos to tell them very explicitly that if they attempted to overthrow his regime by force US would withdraw its aid. I told him that in my talks with Hinh and Tran Van An (mytels 796 and 807)[1] I had gone about as far as I could in warning them of reaction of US to *coup d'état* and that a month ago I had impressed on General Phuong of Cao Dais necessity of rallying behind Diem Government. I felt certain that they had clearly taken in my warning and were disposed to come to terms with government. I was afraid that concessions he had hitherto offered were insufficient. Notably minority membership in an Assembly which had yet to be created was obviously insufficient attraction. I said further that while I could understand his using his brothers and Ministers to engage in initial negotiations with sects he would have very promptly to deal direct with them himself. On that occasion he must be prepared to offer concrete propositions. Furthermore, he could not hope merely to threaten sects into obedience with loss of American aid but he would have to win them over by prospects of advantage, by appeals to their patriotism which he had said they possessed in spite of their appetites, and by establishing friendly personal relations with their leaders. I had always been informed by Vietnamese friends that Vietnamese were sensitive to personal appeal and sympathy.

Comment: This may sound a bit like lecturing but it is a lecture which needs to be repeated again and again. Substantial part of Diem's difficulties resides in his suspicion and distrust of people not possessed of same ideals and motivation as himself and in his lack of personal warmth.

Diem then remarked that "high personality of French Commissariat General" had come to see him day before and told him he must take Tam into his Cabinet; that if he refused to do so both America and France would approve Tam being made Prime Minister.

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[1] For telegram 796 from Saigon, Aug. 29, see p. 1995. Telegram 807 from Saigon, Aug. 30, reporting a conversation with Tran Van An, is not printed. (751G.00/8–3054)

I told him what he should have done in that circumstance was to call me on phone and ask me over to confirm or disprove any such statement. I told him I was certain that Ely had not authorized any member of his staff to make such statement but observed that great many Frenchmen sincerely thought that Tam, as good policeman, would add to effectiveness of Diem's Government if given Ministry of Interior. Diem replied that he would certainly rather resign than accept Tam; that no government could hope to rally support of free Vietnam with Tam on team. He could stand as matter of political necessity leaving General Bay Vien and Binh Xuyen to continue to run police for time, but he could not stand Tam. Binh Xuyen did have public order well in hand in Saigon–Cholon at present time and he felt certain that after a time they would agree to give up their gambling concession and step aside from their police control in Saigon. Bay Vien, while crafty and ambitious, had certain qualities and also a sense of reality. After all, Binh Xuyen were only two thousand strong and if Vietnamese National Army could be brought into shape and under control of government, former could not hope to maintain their control of Saigon.

Diem told me of his talks with Hinh. Hinh had promised to see his brother with a concrete program and list of candidates for a new government under Diem. But when Hinh showed up he had no program and no candidates to offer. Diem observed that Hinh was not strong man, merely an impulsive one, and did not enjoy a true prestige in his own army.

Comment: I will not quarrel with this description of Hinh. We have noted other occasions where he has not followed through.

HEATH

751G.00/9–154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 1, 1954—7 p. m.

848. Repeated information Paris 289, Manila 115, Hanoi unnumbered. Manila for USDel. Wife and I finally accepted invitation from General Bay Vien of Binh Zuyen to dine with him last night. Counselor and two members of my staff were also invited and other guests included General Hinh, Tran Van An, Nguyen Duc Quynh, Le Kieu, and Chief National Surete Lai Huu Sang—in short leading members of Hinh–Binh Zuyen elements of plot to oust Diem Government.

After dinner I talked very firmly, separately, both to Hinh[1] and General Bay Vien. I said that in my four years plus here I had never intervened in any purely internal political matters, but as a friend of Vietnam I must warn them of serious effect on American and other free world opinion of any movement to oust Diem by force or force his resignation at this juncture. I was aware of their criticisms of Diem Government and had myself urged on latter necessity of broadening his government and basing it on all organizations prepared to fight Communism for freedom of Vietnam. I had been told that Diem was now prepared to make broad offer of participation in government to sects. I must express my view that it was absolutely indispensable in view of external and internal situation of Vietnam that sects attempt loyally to work with Diem in government of National Union. This would require concessions both on part of government and of sects. If, after loyal attempt, such coalition failed to work, they might consider altering formula. I observed that we were furnishing great aid to free Vietnam and were prepared to continue, possibly even to expand it. US aid, however, could only be justified if there were patriotic, efficient, and progressive government. That aid, which would now go only to remaining Vietnam, would be sufficient to raise living and social standards.

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[1] Ambassador Heath summarized the remarks of General Hinh in telegram 872 from Saigon, Sept. 2. (751G.00/9–254)

Both Hinh and Bay Vien protested they had been willing to work with Diem but his suspicion and inaction had frustrated them. They both indicated without actually promising that they would work with him in a re-formed government.

I am far from sure at this moment that they are loyally determined to get together with Diem. I believe, or at least hope, that they have given up any thought of a *coup d'état* at this time, but they are going to explore possibilities of change and probably ouster of Diem with Bao Dai.

Hinh has already sent his wife as emissary to Cannes and Bay Vien told a member of Embassy, but not me, that he was leaving shortly for brief trip in France, undoubtedly to confer with Bao Dai. He would be accompanied by Tran Van An, Quynh, and Nguyen Huu Thuan.

HEATH

751G.00/9–354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 3, 1954—9 p. m.

884. Repeated information Paris 294. I accompanied Senator Mansfield[1] on calls yesterday on Prime Minister Diem, Foreign Minister Do, and Acting Commissariat General Bordaz.

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[1] See footnote 2, p. 1997.

I was rather perplexed by fact Diem played down the dangerous political difficulties in which he finds himself. Diem said rightly that his government could not exercise strong control and effective program until it had control of army but then went on to argue that although Hinh had unquestionably plotted with sects, he was sure Hinh would realize that sects were dangerous partners and would return to an attitude of loyalty to government. I find it very difficult to credit that Diem really believes in possibility of Hinh's reasoned repentance and return to loyalty. It is my opinion that Diem glossed over his difficulties in order that Senator should not have too dark a picture of situation here.

Diem went on to point out that sects had divergent interests and also a fund of patriotism which combined would eventually make them come to terms with government. I find this hard to credit. When I asked President how negotiations with Cao Dais were coming on he was rather evasive and said it would be impossible for sects to come immediately to terms with him since they were still bound by their former plot.

Foreign Minister Do was much less optimistic and expressed entire disbelief that Hinh would ever rally voluntarily to government. It was Do's theory that Hinh's ambition to become military dictator had hardened rather than reverse. Do said his information was that prior to departure of Tran Van An and Thuan for France to consult with Bao Dai, the three sects and Hinh had signed joint memorandum to Bao Dai, contents of which were unknown to him but presumably called for dismissal of Diem. On other hand, Do had successfully insisted that Diem send Luyen immediately to persuade Bao Dai to remain neutral and he thought Luyen would succeed, as Luyen had a "certain influence" over Bao Dai. Luyen was able to get on same plane as emissaries of plotters.

Both Diem and Do thought possibility of immediate *coup d'état* had been averted largely due to my "warnings" to Hinh, Tran Van An, and General Le Van Vien. Do said he was convinced that was decisive factor.

In conversation with Bordaz, Mansfield asked him what would be objections to US extending military budgetary aid direct to Vietnam. Bordaz surprisingly replied that there was no objection provided it was done in coordination with French. This is not attitude of La Chambre or of General Ely, although latter has never expressed himself definitely on subject.

In spite of Diem's belief that danger of *coup d'état* has temporarily been averted, he received report today that some unnamed French General was secretly encouraging Hinh to take over government by force. To be on safe side, therefore, Diem is instructing Hinh to accompany him on his three-day visit to various refugee camps beginning tomorrow. It remains to be seen whether Hinh actually accompanies him.

HEATH

751G.00/8-3154 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, September 4, 1954—2:12 p. m.

847. Subject: US military support program for Indochina (Paris 760, 814, 868, 873, 899 Saigon 668, 745).[2]

Basic problem in determining future course action this subject as Department sees it is to determine what military manpower goals should be sought in Indochina and how US financial support can best be used attain such goals and achieve highest quality forces. Our approach this vital subject to French and Associated States authorities depends on views highest US military authorities. Accordingly Department has recommended JCS undertake study forces we would like see Indochina remainder this calendar year and next including judgment what French forces should remain. Study should take account intentions and capabilities other governments concerned to extent we can estimate them. It would begin with fact French expeditionary forces of 240,000 consist some 60,000 Indochinese and remainder Frenchmen, Africans and Legionnaires; although indigenous national armies exceeded 300,000 at time cease fire French now allege large part these forces have disappeared.

Since this military study likely require some weeks and since we cannot afford dissipate what strength now remains Indochina we propose for time being continue present modified aid procedures until we can enter into full negotiation with other governments regarding force concept to pursue Indochina and future direction US aid program.

Regarding force concept may be possible for example that forces Indochina could be built around remainder national armies together with Indochinese presently within Expeditionary Corps and total such indigenous forces including support forces and nationalized militia might amount to considerably less than national forces contemplated this year under $550 million (19.5 billion piaster) program. This in turn could mean future Indochinese national forces might be financed for something on order $300 million year of which

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[1] Drafted by Beigel of WE. Also sent to Saigon as telegram 906. Repeated for information to Manila as Tosec 28. A typed notation on the source text indicates that this telegram was based on a paper approved by the OCB Special Working Group on Indochina.

[2] For telegram 873 from Paris, Aug. 30, see p. 1997. For telegram 668 from Saigon, Aug. 22, see p. 1966. The other telegrams under reference are not printed.

Saigon 668 makes clear US would provide almost all. Determination command relationships between indigenous and remaining French forces would be most important factor in deciding organization such indigenous forces.

If at same time French expeditionary forces are reduced may prove possible reduce French financial requirement from $900 million contemplated this year to amount approximating French contribution this year from their own fiscal resources aside from US support we providing under $400 million program.

If possible in fact cut down US burden along lines outlined above and at same time maintain sufficient forces within Indochina to preserve internal order and stability this would also be in line with what will very likely be competing demands on funds available coming twelve months to meet requirements elsewhere in Asia.

Would like your comment on approach to this problem outlined above and whatever additional information available to help formulate US position this subject.[3]

Foregoing of course not for discussion with representatives other governments.

SMITH

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[3] In telegram 992 from Saigon, Sept. 6, the Embassy concurred in the basic approach outlined in the first paragraph of this telegram, agreed that a study by the Joint Chiefs of Staff was necessary, and provided certain detailed information bearing on the problem. (751G.00/9–654)

751G.00/9–554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 5, 1954—2 p. m.

897. Repeated information Paris 298, Manila 133. Manila for USDel. Ely urgently requested me to see him in Dalat yesterday. He returns to Saigon in 48 hours for ceremony turning over Norodom Palace.

Ely said he had come to my view Diem must be given another chance but only on condition latter broadens his government to include representation of sects and replace inefficient members by capable people. He said this was counter to views of Paris which were that Diem should be gotten out as quickly as possible and, he indicated, contrary to views of some of his advisers one of whom, he indicated, was General Salan. However, Diem could lose no time in forming his new government. Ely agreed pressure must be brought on sects to lower their demands and said he would wire Paris to persuade Bao Dai not to intervene in this situation but to maintain his support of Diem.

Ely took credit for having prevented a *coup d'état* of the sects with General Hinh in overthrowing government last week. He also said he had sent "orders" to Bay Vien not to leave with Tran Van An and Thuan to see Bao Dai and told Bay Vien he should cooperate with Diem government. Bay Vien had sent back word he was willing to do so but wished to have Ministry of Interior for his price. I remarked that was hardly possible. Ely was very insistent Diem should take Tam in as Minister of Interior to which I replied that I was convinced that was one concession Diem would refuse to make; in fact he had told me he would resign rather than accept Tam. Ely said that was very regrettable because Tam was willing to enter Diem's cabinet if latter gave him Interior Ministry and would give him title of vice-president.

At this point Ely suggested General Salan join us. He asked Salan to give his view of the situation and Salan started in by saying unfortunately Diem could not preside effectively over government of union with sects. Diem, in his view, had lost what small popularity he had had by his inaction. He had irritated leading figures in sects and his personality and his physique were so unimpressive that he thought he would be unable to rally masses or their leaders. Ely interrupted at this time to tell him he thoroughly agreed with me that Diem must be given a chance and sects must be told they must cooperate with Diem government. Salan looked unhappy but vouched no further objection.

Both Generals Ely and Salan agreed that military dictatorship or *coup d'état* by Vietnamese national army would be catastrophe. Both agreed Hinh had not the solid qualities necessary to run a military government and they both said he was not man to develop Vietnamese national army. Only difficulty was there was no one better in sight at the moment. Salan's idea of getting Hinh away from army and his party was to make him Minister of Defense and put General Vy in as Chief of Staff of Armed Forces. Salan's opinion of Vy was somewhat higher than Ely's although Salan said Vy was not Hinh's equal in intelligence.

I raised question of availability of Colonel The of Cao Daists. Salan said The was person of force and character and real power among Cao Daists. Only objection was French security had absolute proof that it was The who instigated bomb throwing which resulted in death of General Chanson and Governor of South Vietnam in 1951 and that The was also responsible for explosion of the bicycle bombs in Theater Square in Saigon in 1952. Ely suggested there was no proof that The had set out to assassinate Chanson and Governor but that he merely wished to create a panic bomb explosion in that incident.

HEATH

751G.00/9–554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 5, 1954—3 p. m.

899. Repeated information Paris 300. Dr. Fishel,[1] STEM consultant and personal friend of President Diem, came to see me September 4 to tell me of latest activities of President and of conversation which Fishel had had with Foreign Minister Do.

Diem has now changed his mind and will not have General Hinh accompany him on three day tour refugee centers. This change due to Diem's fear of placing himself in Hinh's hands. He felt temptation might be too great for Hinh to find himself with President in areas remote from Saigon where only forces were national army troops responsive to Hinh's command. Diem has thus decided to leave Hinh behind in Saigon "under close surveillance". Diem's tour of refugee centers is prompted not only by concern for refugees but also by fact he has no place to hang his hat for next few days as French have established themselves in Papais Gialong but have not yet made Palais Norodom available to Vietnamese Government.

During Diem's absence Fishel has been charged with "reorganizing office of the president", a task which he believes will be extremely difficult as it will not be possible make a clean sweep of incompetent personnel.

Diem also considering candidates to head "court of honor" which he will set up to inquire into personal finances government officials and punish grafters and corrupt elements. President is now inclined to go slow on agrarian reform program until he is in stronger position.

Fishel also told me of conversation he had with Foreign Minister Do. Do had talked with Binh Xuyen General Le Van Vien. Do said General Vien had gained impression US strongly backing Diem at this point and General therefore considering terms under which cooperation with Diem will be possible. General Vien would like to be Interior Minister as his price and in addition Do believes could be persuaded to close gambling houses in return for subsidy from government. General Vien's gambling concession runs only until next February 1.

Do believes subsidy need not be more than about 5 million piasters per month as General Vien is already well established financially with handsome income from other investments. This matter has yet to be explored, but Fishel sees advantages in closing gambling establishments with much publicity while government quietly pays off General Vien behind the scenes.

HEATH

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[1] Dr. Wesley R. Fishel of Michigan State University.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 358

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor (MacArthur)[1]

SECRET MANILA, September 6, 1954.

Subject: Indochina

Participants: The Secretary
M. Guy La Chambre, Minister of State,
M. Jean Chauvel,
Mr. MacArthur

M. Guy La Chambre called at his request on the Secretary this evening. After a discussion relating to the draft treaty for Southeast Asia, M. La Chambre said he would like to speak briefly to the Secretary about the situation in Indochina.

He opened by saying that at Geneva the French had fought desperately to get a period of two years' delay in any elections in Vietnam in order to consolidate the situation so that Southern Vietnam would not be lost as a result of the elections. If the elections were to be won, much must be done, and it would be a tragedy if the two-year period negotiated at Geneva were wasted. Two-and-a-half months had elapsed since the Geneva settlement, and little progress had been made in coping with the political and economic problems which must be dealt with if Vietnam were to be saved.

M. La Chambre said that shortly before he left Paris he had conferred with General Ely. General Ely believes that no matter how estimable Prime Minister Diem may be in terms of integrity and purity, he is very ineffective in dealing with the political realities of the situation in Vietnam. His government, thus far, has proved totally ineffective in reconciling the anti-communist elements in retained Vietnam and producing a government which commands wide popular support.

M. La Chambre said the Vietminh is proceeding with great effectiveness in forming communist political groups in South Vietnam to replace the armed communist Vietminh forces which, according to the Geneva settlement provisions, must be disbanded. The Vietminh is forming political cells throughout retained Vietnam and is undertaking a systematic policy of intimidating the population so that they can win the elections in 1956. M. La Chambre said that only the Sects have the capacity for combating the Vietminh campaign of propaganda and intimidation thus neutralizing the Vietminh efforts by

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[1] This conversation occurred at the U.S. Embassy Residence from 6 to 7 p.m. It was reported to Washington in telegram Secto 18 from Manila, Sept. 8. (751G.00/9–854) Secretary Dulles and La Chambre headed the delegations of their respective nations at the Manila Conference on the defense of Southeast Asia, which convened on Sept. 6. Regarding the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, signed on Sept. 8, see editorial note, p. 2012.

"creating a counter-intimidation". La Chambre expressed the view that Tam, if he were appointed Minister of Interior, could handle this problem better than anyone else.

Reverting to Diem's inability to organize broad support behind his government, La Chambre said that the real problem is to find a Prime Minister who could enlist the support of the Sects and the majority of other anti-communist elements. He said Diem was unwilling to work with the Sects and that while he was a man of integrity and intellectual purity, this was not enough if he could not mobilize a broad foundation of support. Diem, he said, was from the North and preferably there should be a leader from the South. There were several possibilities: General Xuan and Tran Van Huu were potential candidates, but they didn't have much character. In La Chambre's own personal view, Buu Hoi, a cousin of Bao Dai, had created a very excellent impression insofar as he was concerned. Hoi was a scientist, had worked with the Pasteur Institute, and had recently been in Paris. While he was a cousin of Bao Dai, he did not share Bao Dai's views.

M. La Chambre said that three weeks ago Bao Dai had made overtures to see him. La Chambre had sent back word that he did not believe any useful purpose would be served by a meeting, whereupon Bao Dai had sent his Director of Cabinet to see La Chambre. The Director of Cabinet told La Chambre that Bao Dai was thinking about returning to Vietnam but did not wish to do so until he knew the views of the French Government regarding his possible return. General Ely, who was present at that meeting, said he was returning to Indochina, that he would consult with various elements there, and then send a recommendation to Paris on the question of Bao Dai's return. A week ago today General Ely had cabled Paris that under no circumstances should Bao Dai be permitted to return. His message had also said that any new Prime Minister that Bao Dai might designate would be contaminated by Bao Dai's blessing and would be unable to perform any useful service.

M. La Chambre said he thought France and the US should sit down to talk about this situation. He asked the Secretary to suggest a date and place either in Washington, Paris, or elsewhere, where the US and France could meet to discuss this situation.

The Secretary replied that it was very difficult in Manila, in Paris, or in Washington to decide on what to do about Vietnam on the basis of cables which are received. He said he shared the view that retained Vietnam was in great danger and that he also believed the Diem Government as presently constituted did not have a sufficiently broad basis to mobilize the maximum possible popular support. However, the consensus of US representatives in Vietnam and the Department of State was that the best solution was to keep Diem and have the latter bring into his Government people who would broaden its structure. He said the US recognizes that the Sects play an important role and that to govern Vietnam effectively and deal with its problems without their support was probably not possible. He said that while we had no particular fondness for Diem, he nonetheless appeared to be a man of integrity and honesty, and we did not know of anyone who might be any better. The Secretary said that when he left Washington the very strong belief there was that all effort should be made to try to get Diem to enlarge the base of his Government by bringing in the Sects, and that according to the cables which he had received since he had arrived in Manila, this was still our strong view. We did not believe any useful purpose would be served in getting rid of Diem since no better substitute had been advanced. He mentioned that Senator Mansfield had recently been in Indochina and had expressed the view that Diem might possibly be the last chance of a Prime Minister who could be effective.

M. La Chambre hastened to assure the Secretary that he also would rather have Diem enlarge his Government than to have him eliminated. However, if the enlargement consisted of simply adding one or two people as a gesture, it was not good enough. What was required was a fundamental reorganization of the Diem Government in order to give it really solid support of the Sects and other elements. M. La Chambre said that two-and-a-half months had been wasted since the Geneva settlement, and it was intolerable that the situation in Vietnam continued to drift, with the elections drawing ever closer. The present situation was untenable simply because Diem would not adequately enlarge his Government and at the same time insisted on remaining in power. If he were incapable as Prime Minister of enlarging his Government, he should step down and let another try. In such event, he should most certainly be given a post in any new government, and La Chambre thought Diem would be well-fixed in such circumstances to have the Ministry of Interior, for example. He said the point he was trying to make was that Diem, as Prime Minister, was doing nothing to create a Government which would really have broad support, and as a consequence the situation was deteriorating from day to day.

M. La Chambre said that France attached the greatest importance to coordinating economic affairs in Indochina with the program which the US might wish to undertake. Without such coordination, satisfactory results would not be achieved and the end result might be that the economic resources which were put into retained Vietnam might end up in the hands of the Vietminh as a result of the elections. Proper coordination, he felt, would ensure that such economic assistance as France and the US put forward would result in constructive results in terms of the 1956 elections. M. La Chambre said the French Government was trying to undertake a program where all the refugees from Northern Vietnam who arrived in the South would be given two or three hectares of land and a black cow. The effective resettlement of the refugees from the North was of vital importance. If these refugees received two or three hectares of land and sufficient assistance to start life anew, it would be the best proof that life on this side of the iron curtain was infinitely preferable to slavery behind it.

The Secretary said M. La Chambre had raised a number of difficult questions. He would reflect on them and hoped M. La Chambre in turn would reflect on the views which he, the Secretary, had set forth. The Secretary concluded by saying that if he had any thoughts on this matter he would doubtless have opportunity to discuss them further with M. La Chambre before the conclusion of the Manila Conference.

751G.5/9–754

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] September 7, 1954.

Participants: Mr. Robert Anderson, Deputy Secretary of Defense
Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Mr. Murphy
Mr. Merchant

During a conference on another subject Secretary Anderson brought up the question of the Department's 847 to Paris and Saigon[1] (informing them of our request of JCS to study a sound force plan for the South Vietnamese National Army and pointing out that some of the extravagantly high aid figures being bandied around might have no relevance to a soundly conceived total program) and objected to its despatch. He had read it as implicitly indicating that the US was committed to a large scale military assistance program in South Vietnam. He said that no such decision had been reached by the subcommittee of OCB, on whose position paper the telegram had been based, that it had not been directed by OCB to reach any conclusions. He went on to say that Defense felt that in the absence of any sound political base in Indochina there was no justification for large scale military assistance. He referred to the uncertainties in the local political situation. Secretary Anderson also said that the JCS were not preparing a force plan nor had they been requested to do so (the letter from General Smith to Defense making this request[2] had been been signed and sent out the same day but had not been received at that point by Secretary Anderson).

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[1] Dated Sept. 4, p. 2003.

[2] *Infra.*

It was pointed out to Secretary Anderson that the essential purpose of the telegram was to bring our Embassies in Paris and Saigon down to earth on the aid outlook and to get them thinking in terms of a realistic approach to the problem.

The conversation ended on a somewhat inconclusive note, but Secretary Anderson did not ask the despatch of any clarifying or amending message.

751G.00/9–754

The Acting Secretary of State to the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Anderson)

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] September 7, 1954.

DEAR MR. ANDERSON: The United States is presently faced with the very serious problem of deciding in what manner best to support the internal security and sustain the self-government and integrity of the free states of Indochina. In deciding upon and carrying out United States policies in that area in an orderly manner it is of great importance that we have the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of Defense regarding the military forces the United States would like to see remain in Indochina in order to assure the success of this policy.

In line with the suggestion of the Special Working Group on Indochina, I recommend that the Joint Chiefs of Staff cause a study to be made for their consideration as rapidly as possible of the overall force which should be retained or developed in free Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia during the remainder of 1954 and in 1955. In this connection, consideration should be given to the question of what French forces should remain in Indochina to assure the (*a*) internal security of the area as well as (*b*) its security against Viet Minh aggression. If possible the study should cover troop strength, organization of forces, infrastructure, training and material. Most important, it should consider the desirable relationship between French and indigenous forces in Indochina during this period in both command and training.

To the extent practicable the Joint Chiefs of Staff should take into account the information that is available regarding the intentions and capabilities of the other governments concerned regarding the future development of military strength in the free states of Indochina.

I believe that the views requested above will enable the United States to conduct more successfully negotiations with the French Government and the Governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia regarding the future direction of the United States military and financial assistance and relationships in Indochina. These views will be particularly necessary in determining what funds the United States should continue to make available from presently available appropriations for a military support program in Indochina, since the force concept appears to be basic to the development and implementation of a sound military support program in that area. It would also be of great assistance if in the study outlined above the Joint Chiefs of Staff also consider the probable approximate cost of whatever military force program it proposes, taking into account the assets which may become available from end-item matériel already delivered to Indochina.

Sincerely, WALTER B. SMITH

Editorial Note

At Manila, on September 8, 1954, representatives of Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States signed the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. According to the provisions of the Manila Pact, each Party agreed in the event of aggression against any other Party to act to meet the common danger in a manner consistent with its constitutional processes. In a separate protocol, the Parties to the Treaty agreed to guarantee in addition the territory of Cambodia, Laos, and non-Communist Vietnam against aggression.

For the text of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and the Pacific Charter also signed by the eight nations of the Manila Conference, see Department of State *Bulletin*, September 20, 1954, pages 394–396. For extensive documentation on the Manila Conference and the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, see volume XII.

751G.00/9–854 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Department of State

SECRET MANILA, September 8, 1954—8 p. m.

Secto 21. Repeated information Paris 13, Saigon 161. Reference Secto 18, repeated Paris 11, Saigon 155.[1] Senator Mansfield,[2] accompanied by Kidder, counselor Saigon, saw Minister La Chambre today at latter's request. La Chambre reiterated much of what he told Secretary, as reported reftel.

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[1] See footnote 1, p. 2007.

[2] Senator Mansfield was a member of the U.S. Delegation to the Manila Conference. He visited Indochina both before and after the conference in connection with the report he was preparing as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Regarding the report, see footnote 2, p. 1997.

La Chambre emphasized necessity meeting soon between French and Americans in order coordinate intimately political and economic policy. This as well as strengthening of Vietnamese Government essential if ever-increasing Communist infiltration and intimidation in remaining Vietnam to be stopped. Daridan has reported to La Chambre that Diem totally ineffectual, that although a man of goodwill, he is not man of will. La Chambre willing go along with Diem if Diem could really re-organize government and get support of sects, but apparently places little hope in such contingency, particularly since Diem is not from south and Cochin Chinese indifferent to northern leadership.

La Chambre sent Ambassador De Jean to see Bao Dai over past week end to inform Bao Dai in response his request for French opinion that Bao Dai should not return to Vietnam.

With regard to possible alternatives to expanded Diem Government, La Chambre mentioned Tran Van Huu who he characterized as best politician available. However, Huu has no character and no will. Tam he rules out as Prime Minister but insists he must be Minister of Interior in whatever government is formed, as he only man capable of controlling police and counteracting Communist expansion. Tam would bring to any government support of sects. La Chambre also mentioned Buu Hoi who, however, has defect of having been 15 years out of country. Raphael Leygues, who in Vietnam on mission as personal representative of La Chambre but without any authority, had suggested Buu Hoi who La Chambre understands is favorably viewed by sects. In reply to La Chambre question, Kidder stated he had found Buu Hoi politically extremely naive. La Chambre then developed theory that whoever Prime Minister might be, he could be to some extent figurehead with real power held by other ministers. Buu Hoi is also member Royal Family and would lend some aspect legitimacy to government in case Bao Dai should be removed, which might be necessary within two to three months. Raphael Leygues will return Paris in about one week and La Chambre will give serious consideration to his report.

In response Senator Mansfield's question re General Hinh, La Chambre expressed considerable disgust but gave no detailed views.

Senator Mansfield thanked La Chambre for frank expression views and expressed opinion that change in government every few weeks in Vietnam extremely unhealthy and that in absence good alternative we believe Diem government should be supported and encouraged broaden basis government so as to make it effective. He said he was looking forward seeing General Ely in Saigon and La Chambre later in Paris.

DULLES

751G.00/9–954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, September 9, 1954—9 p. m.

933. Repeated information Paris 312. Prime Minister Diem sent word to me urgently this afternoon, September 9, by Dr. Fishel that his agents had uncovered plot by Hinh and officers of National Army to overthrow government.

According Diem his agent had attended meeting held Saigon 5 p. m. September 5 of 16 National Army officers including Hinh and two of his most trusted henchmen, Colonels Lam and Giai (G–6 and G–5 respectively). Several sector Commandants and other members Hinh's staff among those present. Hinh reported to have called meeting to order, described critical situation facing Vietnam and inaction civil government under Diem. Hinh said it was up to National Army to save Vietnam and he left matter up to assembled officers, making his own departure from meeting at this point. Colonel Lam then took over unfurling banner bearing Nationalist slogan. In speech to assembled group Lam is said to have listed things that army was "against" including civil government led by Diem, Communism, Bao Dai and colonialism. Remarks against Bao Dai reported to have received considerable response with several officers shouting "down with Bao Dai". When Lam pronounced against colonialism, voice from group is reported to have enquired "what kind of colonialism?" Lam is said to have made puzzling reply "Chinese colonialism".

Letters from various "Nationalist groups" calling on army to save nation were read assembled officers. Considerable discussion ensued by [*but*] officers were unable to agree on immediate course of action and adjourned.

Above events immediately reported Diem who called in Secretary of State in Defense Ministry Chan [1] and talked over matter with him. Decision was reached to arrest Lam and Giai but not General Hinh as they felt there was not enough information available concerning Hinh and also because they feared for some reason arrest of Hinh would disclose Diem's informant. At Diem's order Chan placed Lam and Giai under house arrest September 8. This may have been mistake as Hinh has had ample opportunity talk with them since their arrest. Hinh appealed to Diem night of September 8 and again morning September 9 to be permitted punish officers himself on grounds they are young misguided Nationalists who had been led astray by impatience at inaction of government.

Considerable verbal fencing reported to have taken place between Diem and Hinh as to whether officers were alone in plot and over nature and extent of evidence possession Diem. Diem gave impression to Hinh he had considerable evidence but did not indicate directly that he knew of Hinh's personal involvement. In midst of discussion Hinh suggested that perhaps he should "go on leave". Diem immediately took him up, saying "Good! How long will you be away?" Hinh asked for time to think matter over but Diem insisted on immediate answer. Hinh suggested three months but Diem countered with demand he take six months leave. Hinh departed to reflect but returned for further discussion with Diem afternoon September 9. Nature this discussion not known at present.

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[1] Le Ngoc Chan.

Diem sent word to me through Fishel that he urgently requested me see Ely at once and inform him of foregoing. Diem would like Ely to call in Hinh and pointedly urge him to take his leave in France at once.

I plan to see Ely at 7 o'clock this evening to discuss matters and will report further.

HEATH

751G.5/9–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 10, 1954—6 p. m.

953. Repeated information priority Paris 317. Embtel 933, repeated Paris 310 [*312*].[1] President Diem has today relieved General Hinh as Chief of Staff Vietnamese National Army and replaced him by General Vy.

Events leading up to this development have moved very swiftly. Hinh failed to appear for 5 p. m. appointment with President September 9. Diem sent Secretary State for Defense Chan look for Hinh. Chan was unable locate Hinh either at army headquarters or at home and was told Hinh had not been seen since morning. This morning, September 10, Diem learned that General Hinh had reappeared and summoned Hinh to Palace. Hinh arrived shortly after 11 a. m. and heated discussion between President and Chief of Staff ensued.

Diem pointed out sternly that Hinh had failed to show up for appointment at which he was to tell President how long he would be absent on leave. President intimated to Hinh that he knew of Hinh's involvement in plot. Hinh defended himself, pointing out he had founded National Army, his officers devoted to him and would be unwilling to see him leave country at this time and said he had mentioned going on leave only because President insisted on punishment of Colonels Lam and Giai who had been arrested for plotting against Government.

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[1] *Supra.*

Diem announced he had stood enough, that he was relieving Hinh of duties as Chief of Staff immediately and had already ordered General Vy to take over from Hinh. In order save Hinh embarrassment President was sending him on six months "study" mission in France and expected him to leave by Sunday, September 12. Hinh pleaded for time but President was adamant. Hinh asked if he might return after two or three weeks to pack belongings he would not be able assemble in short time President had given him to depart. Diem replied his decision on this would be based on Hinh's conduct during those two or three weeks.

General Hinh asked President if he would refrain from prosecuting officers involved in plot should Hinh leave. President did not reply. Hinh asked if he might take with him staff officers who were deeply devoted to him and would undoubtedly wish accompany him. Again President did not reply. Hinh pointed out General Van was senior to General Vy and asked that he be spared embarrassment by being sent on leave at this time while General Vy took over as Chief of Staff. President agreed to this.

Prior to his interview with General Hinh, Diem had already written and signed order relieving Hinh of his duties and appointing General Vy Chief of Staff. He had also spoken to Vy evening September 9, telling him of his intentions. Vy had been reluctant supplant Hinh but Diem told him this war order and Vy said he would obey orders of President. Presidential order making change was rushed through legal processing while Hinh's interview was going on and was finally effective before interview was concluded.

President will inform Cabinet of this development this afternoon and change of command scheduled to take place 5 p. m. this afternoon, September 10 at army headquarters.

Diem feels that General Vy is not as strong a soldier as he would wish to have as Chief of Staff but believes he is best available.

It is still possible Hinh or hot-headed staff officers devoted to him may yet attempt use force.

If Diem is by this action able gain control of army through General Vy who has been ordered select new and loyal staff officers, he will have made big step toward putting himself into position of strength from which he should have opportunity create strong government.[3]

HEATH

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[3] In telegram 954 from Saigon, Sept. 10, 7 p. m., Ambassador Heath reported that General Vy had refused to assume the duties of Chief of Staff. The Ambassador stated: "It appears to us that this is moment at which showdown must come between Diem and Hinh and one or other will emerge as major force." He thought that the French would not intervene unless widespread disorders occurred. (751G.5/9–1054)

751G.00/9-1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, September 11, 1954—7 p. m.

969. Repeated information Paris 322, Vientiane unnumbered. I made farewell visit this week to Laos where Prince Savang gave dinner in my honor and said kind things about my mission in Laos.

Prince Savang left tenth for brief trip to France, returning end of month. He is bitter over "Geneva agreements" which he asserts Laos never signed and only tacitly accepted as result of increasing French pressure. He said there was bitter anti-French feeling developing as result of Geneva agreements and a political group was in formation which would endeavor in next special session of Parliament to turn country away from France in direction of US. Savang said he thoroughly realized this would be extremely dangerous in view of Laotian military and economic dependence on France at this moment and he thought he could checkmate any such political action, but it would be difficult. French High Commissioner had shown him proposed drafts of Manila pact and he liked none of them. Guarantees against external aggression were insufficient against Communist tactics. There should be, he argued, guarantees of "constitutional government" of Laos against Communist-provoked internal disorders.

Pathet-Lao movement, which is given some recognition in cease-fire agreement for Laos, is in itself unimportant, according to Savang; he says that in all Laos there are not more than 800 adherents with only five Communist leaders of any importance. Pathet-Lao movement is, however, Chinese invention and there is nothing in agreements to prevent China from stepping up its subsidy and backing to make phantom Pathet-Lao organization real danger to Laos.

Savang and Phouy Sannanikone,[1] were much preoccupied over Souvanna Phouma's conversations with his half-brother Souphanouvong, "leader" of the Pathet-Lao. Souvanna Phouma had just returned from all day conference with his brother at Xieng Khouang. Souphanouvong had written a statement declaring his loyalty and submission to the constitutional Government of Laos. Souvanna Phouma believes that this statement is sincere and asserted emphatically that his half-brother is not a Communist. Savang and Sannanikone believe that if not a Communist Souphanouvong is under the control of the Viet Minh. As example, Savang cited fact that Souphanouvong did not accept immediately invitation to meet with his half-brother Premier Souvanna Phouma, alleging illness as excuse for delay. Actually what happened was that Souphanouvong was required by the Viet Minh to return to Tonkin for briefing and instructions before meeting with Souvanna Phouma. Souphanouvong's wife is Vietnamese and presumably Viet Minh. Souvanna Phouma is quite willing to let his half-brother enter the government because, according to Savang, he does not understand the danger of Communist penetration and because he is moved by a feeling of family loyalty. The latter sounds somewhat remarkable since according to Savang Souvanna Phouma's father had never recognized the legitimacy of or supported Souphanouvong on the grounds that his concubine mother had made excursions out of the harem.

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[1] Phoui Sannanikone, Foreign Minister of Laos.

When leaving Saigon Savang indicated to me that on his return he planned to change the government, presumably ousting Souvanna Phouma. Savang said that it was necessary to form a government convinced of and able to do battle with Communist penetration.

I called on Ambassador Krohsla, Chief of the International Supervisory Commission for Laos, and had a pleasant, if inconclusive, conversation.[2] French High Commissioner Breal not sure this was intentional but was upset by the possibility.

Savang tells me toward the end of the year he hopes to raise Laotian Legation in Washington to an Embassy.

HEATH

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[2] There is an apparent omission in the source text at this point.

751G.13/9–1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 11, 1954—7 p. m.

971. Repeated information priority Paris 323. Embtel 954.[1] Following are latest developments in struggle between Diem and General Hinh:

Faced with refusal General Vy assume duties as Chief of Staff replacing General Hinh, Diem relieved Vy of duty and placed him on inactive service.

After study of list of Vietnamese officers which lasted well into night, Diem decided to order Colonel Minh of Vietnamese General Staff to take over Hinh's duties. Minh is only 31 years old but appeared to be only candidate available in Saigon area in whom President felt he could have some confidence. State Secretary for Defense Chan was sent in middle of the night to wake Minh and order him take over duties as Chief of Staff. Minh temporized and early this morning sent in his definite refusal.

Diem reacted by appointing Chan, the civilian Secretary of State for Defense, as Chief of Staff in addition his other duties and directed him take over from Hinh. Meanwhile Colonel LeRoy who has returned from France, was sounded out and claimed he could obtain support "several battalions" in Saigon area. It was reported, although unconfirmed, that LeRoy would second Chan in his new duties.

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[1] See footnote 2, p. 2016.

Chan wished to serve orders upon Hinh relieving him as Chief of Staff and directing him depart Saigon Sunday September 12 for study mission in France. Hinh invited Chan to lunch with him for this purpose. Chan, perhaps wisely, refused but it was agreed that the two would lunch together in public at 1 o'clock today at Majestic Hotel.

At lunch Chan presented General Hinh with Diem's orders. Hinh stated categorically he could not leave so soon and said he could not depart before Monday or Tuesday. Chan is reported to have said he would see what could be done and to have set about changing reservations to Monday, September 13.

Meanwhile news story was filed by French journalist Lucien Bodard stating Hinh had been dismissed by Diem in "coup d'etat" being staged by President and representing General Hinh as innocent and injured party. Diem's government was pictured as very weak and about to fall and Diem's move was one of desperation. Telegraph office held up message and notified Interior Ministry and Interior Ministry in turn informed President requesting permission censor story. Diem at this point had attack of misty metaphysics, refusing to censor story in view his recent promise end all censorship political articles. During afternoon he ordered Interior Ministry to pass article.

Shortly thereafter Hinh telephoned Chan reportedly "in a rage" over the article concerning which he appeared well informed. Hinh told Chan he could stand no more and will "take action". President has sent his private secretary Kiem [2] to appeal to Daridan, informing him of Hinh's announced intention and requesting assistance prevent use of force. Daridan is in charge temporarily by reason of Ely's absence in north and General Salan's absence over the week end in Nha Trang.

At this writing, Hinh has two armored cars at his house in addition to guards to "protect him from the President". President in addition to Palace guard of 200 men is in process bringing in 100 trusted soldiers in disguise and they are reported to be moving into Palace grounds in guise of refugees carrying weapons hidden in bundles.

General Hinh is reported to have approached Binh Xuyen, Cao Dai, and Hoa Hao to gain their support in appeal to Bao Dai prevent Diem from removing Hinh as Chief of Staff. We are uninformed at present whether this support is designed to go beyond appeal to Bao Dai but hostility of sects toward Diem is well known.

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[2] Pham Duy Khiem.

Diem's government, weak and hesitant, is very near point where it may be overthrown by force. Attitude of French and whether or not they take action at this time will probably be deciding factor. When I accompanied Senator Mansfield to call on Daridan yesterday evening, Daridan said that French were keeping entirely neutral in the circumstances and would only intervene if they received information that Hinh would try forcibly overthrow Diem. He said French would not tolerate use of force and would summon Hinh and tell him so in case of necessity. We have now reached point where such action on part of French authorities is urgently required.[3]

HEATH

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[3] Telegram 984 to Saigon, Sept. 11, read as follows: "Your 971 rptd info Paris 323. Department closely following situation and greatly concerned over disunity confronting Diem. In your discretion express to Diem and others US hopes present crisis can be rapidly overcome and strength new government consolidated under Diem who appears working sincerely and conscientiously that end for good of Free Viet-Nam in face Communist danger." (751G.00/9–1154)

751G.00/9–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 13, 1954—2 p. m.

981. Repeated information Paris 326. General O'Daniel, Chief MAAG, informed Embassy Counselor that yesterday he "happened to run into" General Hinh, Chief of Staff Armed Forces Vietnamese National Army, and had two hour conversation with him at Hinh's house.

O'Daniel told Hinh that he had heard much talk of Hinh's political ambitions and outlined to Hinh his views on proper place for military in democratic political system. O'Daniel appealed to Hinh's patriotism and asked him if his first loyalty was not for his country and if he had political ambitions. Hinh replied that his country comes first and that he has no political ambitions but that he and his officers felt that in leaving country at this time he, Hinh, would be running out on his job. He, nevertheless, apparently willing to go. O'Daniel suggested to Hinh that as he was loyal to President and had no political ambitions he so inform Prime Minister Diem and offer his full cooperation. Hinh immediately telephoned Secretary of State for Defense Chan in presence O'Daniel and latter's aide and told Chan that he willing support and cooperate with Diem. Chan, according to O'Daniel's account of what Hinh said, replied that ticket for Hinh depart for France purchased for September 14 for stay in France of three weeks to one month. However, Chan said he would report conversation to Prime Minister Diem later that same evening.

Hinh's proposal would be for himself to continue as Chief of Staff Armed Forces with General Vy as Commander of First Corps and Colonel Do Chief of Staff Army. O'Daniel believes Hinh should be given office in Presidential Palace and be direct adviser to Prime Minister on military matters with ultimate decision in hands of Prime Minister. In reply to O'Daniel's statement that he does not understand why Diem with so much to worry about should make so much ado about change of Chief of Staff, Counselor explained that problem revolving around Hinh goes straight to heart of major political problem of future of Diem government, a problem which had been discussed by Ambassador and others, including General O'Daniel that same morning.[1]

HEATH

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[1] In telegram 987, Sept. 13, Heath added the following: "O'Daniel's call on Hinh was made against my explicit oral instructions which he said he did not hear. However, while no harm was done by his intervention, neither was any good. In my opinion, not even temporary solution of difficulties Diem's government experiencing can be achieved without Hinh's departure from the country." (751G.00/9-1354) The Ambassador also described the incident in detail in a letter to Assistant Secretary Robertson of Sept. 16; for text, see *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, Book 10, pp. 753-755. Finally, he expressed the fear in telegram 1069, Sept. 17, that General O'Daniel, whose sympathies he believed to be with Hinh, might "break out disastrously in political matters again." (711.551/9-1754)

751G.00/9-1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, September 13, 1954—9 p. m.

990. Repeated information Paris 331, Hanoi unn. Department pass USIA. Re Deptel 943, sent Paris 811 and Paris telegram sent Department 1037, repeated Saigon 115, Hanoi 13.[1] Following are excerpts of conversation between PAO Hellyer and press officer Simpson of USIS and French combat cameraman Pierre Schoendorffer.

Schoendorffer three year veteran numerous combat missions Indochina was captured when Dien Bien Phu fell. Recently released he has returned Saigon. Following comments regarding Dien Bien Phu and Viet Minh methods are his:

"De Castries was complete failure both as fighting man and decent officer. He badly organized defense after taking over from Gilles giving one of most important positions near airstrip to Algerian battalion (one of his favorites) with result that battalion collapsed under first attacks and although Legionaries attempted several times to take back position, it was never again usable. Toward end when collapse Dien Bien Phu became inevitable, Colonels Bigeard and Langlais repeatedly requested that attempt be made to break out of fort and head for Laos, thus saving at least some of garrison. These requests refused both by De Castries and Navarre. When whole picture began to fall apart De Castries retired into himself and would spend long hours in headquarters bunker going over maps and playing bridge with some of his staff. Bigeard and Langlais carried burden, continually exposing themselves to heavy artillery bombardments as they moved from strong point to strong point. De Castries left shelter once during last days to visit wounded, but voyage was quick and for most part through communications trench from headquarters bunker to hospital. During last days Langlais in effect took complete operational command seldom bothering even consult De Castries."

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[1] Telegram 943 to Saigon, Sept. 8, not printed, concerned anti-American statements allegedly made by Colonel de Castries, the French commander at Dien Bien Phu, when interviewed by an East German correspondent prior to his release by the Viet Minh. (751G.00/9-854) In telegram 1037 from Paris, Sept. 10, the Embassy reported that according to the French Foreign Ministry, de Castries never made the statements attributed to him. (751G.00/9-1054)

Questioned on possibility De Castries declaration to East German correspondent Schoendorffer said, "I would not doubt De Castries made such a statement knowing his character." In regard De Castries treatment while prisoner Schoendorffer said Viet Minh treated De Castries with contempt but at same time showed great respect for Colonels Bigeard and Langlais.

Schoendorffer has always been what one could call liberal left wing Frenchman. Therefore, reactions after captivity particularly significant. Schoendorffer said never realized how serious threat the Viet Minh Communists were and expressed thought "these people are threat to all Asia." He told of Communist indoctrination classes that he attended and described efforts young Viet Minh lieutenants to indoctrinate him as "pitifully inadequate." He did state, however, that fact Viet Minh thought he was swallowing line and seemed content with indoctrination, was dangerous thing. He stated that he had never seen people so controlled and so persecuted as Viet Minh he had contact with. He also said that before capture he felt that Viet Minh were mostly Nationalists sprinkled with Communists, but now is certain that Communists have complete control of party. He said that strong anti-American campaign was carried out among men captured from Dien Bien Phu. Each day news from Geneva conference was read to prisoners and if conference had not accomplished much during day blame was laid on Americans.

Schoendorffer said he had fill of Russian and Chinese films. He said that movie showings were at least three times week, consisted mostly of heavy, tragic propaganda films shown with portable projection units. Schoendorffer's over-all comment on Viet Minh is perhaps most significant: "they are people who have forgotten how to smile."

Schoendorffer plans return North Vietnam to film Viet Minh entry Hanoi. This plus the fact still employed by French makes necessary his name remain classified.

HEATH

751G.13/9–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, September 13, 1954—11 p. m.

992. Repeated information Paris 333. Limit distribution. It is perhaps premature to make any definite prediction at this moment but tension in Diem–Hinh conflict appears to be relaxing and result may well be that Diem, with some outside help and advice, may have won this round. During week-end there was always possibility of clash between Hinh's guards and Vietnamese soldiers guarding military radio broadcasting office, but fortunately no incident occurred.

As reported in mytel 971 September 11, Hinh, taking for pretext story by correspondent Bodard to Paris press that Diem was dismissing him, called up Prime Minister's office and said if such publicity being issued he would not only not consider leaving but would "take action." Shortly after that news reached Prime Minister's office that army radio was broadcasting attacks on Diem Government. I had PAO Hellyer send someone to radio station where he found situation described in Tousi 80 September 13.[1] We encouraged Diem to see former Defense Minister Quat, which he did last night, and Quat reports he told Diem his order in relieving Hinh of his duties and attempting unsuccessfully to replace him by other officers and finally by Secretary of State for Defense Chan were imprudent, since Diem did not have necessary authority and power in his own hands to bring about these changes in such summary fashion. Quat generally calmed him down while at same time supporting him in his decision to remove Hinh from scene.

We also conveyed to Diem through his advisers that we thought Defense State Secretary Chan was too rash in his advice regarding removal of Hinh. We are informed that one of latter's actions was attempt to countermand invitation to Hinh for Diem's dinner in honor of General Ely tonight. Fortunately Chan was reached before invitation had actually been countermanded.

I went to see Ely this morning at latter's request. To latter's inquiry as to what I thought should be done to solve this situation, I said that Hinh should go to France although perhaps his departure might not be as abrupt as Diem insisted, and that once in France organization of

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[1] Not printed.

Vietnamese staff could be changed and Hinh could be "elevated" to position similar to that of our Chairman of Joint Chiefs and act as military adviser to Prime Minister, but without direct command of troops. I told Ely I had just heard that Diem had calmed down and had informed me through one of his advisers that, if Hinh would leave, he was prepared to go to see him off at airport and, if Hinh would issue press statement asserting his loyalty to Diem's Government, Diem would issue similar statement declaring his confidence in Hinh and his intention to retain him in service. Ely said that was also his idea of solution but he thought that as further sop to Hinh latter might be given title of Inspector General of Army. Ely was going shortly to see Diem and urge this solution on him. Hinh, however, should not be informed of any change in his status until he was safely out of country. Ely told me he had sent for Hinh that morning and had had difficult interview although Hinh had shown himself surprisingly calm. Ely had told him that there must not be any disorder in streets of Saigon and that if his officers attempted *coup d'etat* against Diem Government new regime would not be recognized by France and other countries.

I told Ely that whatever his qualities Hinh could not in my opinion form type of Vietnamese army which France and US sought. Ely said emphatically that was his opinion and that of French General Staff, which held Hinh largely responsible for poor development of Vietnamese National Army to date. He remarked also that Diem had said that when he was summoned by Bao Dai to head new government, Bao Dai had privately advised him that, if he wanted to succeed, he should get rid of Hinh as chief of staff.

After his talk with Diem at noon, Ely informed me that Diem had said he would go to airport to see Hinh off but made no mention of seeing Hinh personally before then or issuing press statement to save Hinh's face. Moreover, he was insistent that Hinh must leave tomorrow morning, although Madame Hinh had arrived only today from Paris and did not [plan] return immediately to France.

I saw Diem this afternoon. He told me he planned to go to airport to see Hinh off tomorrow but he did not plan to see him before then unless Hinh attended State dinner which Diem was giving tonight. Up to that time Hinh had not given his acceptance. I urged Diem to see Hinh personally and when he saw him to urge him to attend dinner and also recommended that in order to spare feelings and prestige of army, he arrange for press statements by himself and Hinh on occasion of latter's departure. At that moment Diem's secretary brought in a telegram from Bao Dai saying that in view of Diem's explanation and Hinh's request for congé he had ordered that Hinh be sent on special mission to France. Diem was jubilant and said that now he would see Hinh. He also remarked that he was pleased that Bao Dai had not let him down.

There the matter stands at present.

HEATH

751G.00/9–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 13, 1954—9 p. m.

995. Repeated information Paris 336. Ely told me this morning that Bao Dai had informed DeJean last week of his intention shortly to change Diem Government. At this moment when Diem's conflict with Hinh and his officers seems to be in way of settlement with Hinh's presumed departure for France and since Diem is not far from agreement with sects to form broader government, it would be unfortunate if Diem ousted now. Anyone that Bao Dai is now likely to suggest would be change for worse. There is still some promise of making something out of Diem government. At least for moment, there is no one better in sight.

I recommend that someone from Paris Embassy, say Counselor Gibson, sound out Bao Dai at Cannes and say it is opinion of this Embassy that it would be mistake change Diem at this time.[1]

HEATH

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[1] In telegram 1090 from Paris, Sept. 14, repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 121, Ambassador Dillon stated the following:

"Saigon's 336 (Department 995) September 13.

"We fear any move made by Embassy contact Bao Dai as suggested reference telegram would be subject misinterpretation and encounter opposition in both French and Vietnamese circles, thereby doing more harm than good. We believe that any move that we might make in this direction regardless how well we might keep French informed would only be regarded by them as example clear-cut US interference in Vietnamese internal affairs and would render meaningless in their eyes all our expressions of hope that they (French) not interfere in any way in Vietnamese internal affairs. As we have indicated, French official circles currently taking position, which they state in line our expressions, that Bao Dai is Chief of State and as such he free make own decisions and to return Vietnam when he desires, and that they (French) have no intention interfere or do more than give advice when requested." (751G.00/9–1454)

In telegram 1029 from Saigon, Sept. 15, Ambassador Heath attempted to refute the arguments set forth in Paris telegram 1090, pointing out that Vietnam was not a constitutional government but one in which absolute power was theoretically vested in an absolute monarch. The United States could not avoid intervening to the extent of giving advice to the various parties concerned, with a view to building up Vietnam against the Communist threat. (751G.00/9–1554) However, in telegram 1038 to Saigon (962 to Paris), also Sept. 15, the Department indicated that since an approach to Bao Dai was likely to have little effect, none should be made. (751G.00/9–1454)

751G.00/9–1454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, September 14, 1954—7 p. m.

1007. Repeated information Paris 339. Diem's state dinner last night in honor General Ely in Norodom Palace, now rechristened Independence Palace, was historic and rather dramatic affair. It was Diem Government's first state dinner after more than two months in office, previous dinner for General Ely having been cancelled. Dramatic element was furnished by appearance of General Hinh who circulated among 150 guests with tolerable imitation of ease and confidence.

President had sent for him at six o'clock, urged him to attend dinner, and reluctantly consented to Hinh postponing his departure for few days. (*Comment:* I thoroughly agree with President's reluctance. Diem cannot move ahead with reconstitution of his Government until Hinh is out of picture. We have some fear that Hinh may try to postpone his departure for week or so hoping that tide will turn in his favor. If he does so, then all available influence should be brought to bear on him. While Diem says with some truth that he is not vindictive, he is more furious and distrustful of Hinh's sincerity than ever. He told me so last night.)

Dinner was well arranged and went off pleasantly but there was no oratory wasted. Diem merely formally toasted Coty as President of France and of French Union. Ely replied with equal brevity toasting Bao Dai.

Most of French guests looked unhappy. General Salan and Admiral Auboyneau were conspicuous by their absence.

HEATH

751G.13/9–1354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, September 14, 1954—7 : 48 p. m.

1021. Saigon's 992 and 994 repeated Paris 333 and 335.[2] Vietnamese Ambassador called on Department morning fourteenth obviously under great emotional strain. He launched into long diatribe against

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[1] Drafted by McClintock and Hoey of FE. Also sent to Paris as telegram 951.

[2] For telegram 992 from Saigon, Sept. 13, see p. 2023. Telegram 994, also Sept. 13, read as follows:

"Ely tells me he is under very great pressure from France to use his influence to get Diem government out. He says that he and one of his counselors, Wintrebert, are only French officers and officials here who have any confidence in Diem and think he should be given chance to form better government. Ely is still very insistent that Diem should take Tam in as Interior Minister. I told him that while we had respect for Tam's good qualities, Washington and Embassy were very definitely of opinion that Tam should not be forced on government at this time. Later place might be found for him." (751G.00/9–1354)

Hinh including lack qualifications and past inadequacies. Hinh represented as tool of France, responsible for unnecessary abandonment Phat Diem and Bui Chu.

Ambassador had prepared statement to the press which he proposed releasing here today and which constituted an apparent effort clarify background Diem–Hinh conflict. At this stage Ambassador was informed contents Saigon 992 and his relief was apparent. He asked be informed confirmation that Hinh had actually departed, which we promised convey upon receipt. He will not issue press release.

Department concurs your response Ely reference Tam (Saigon 994). We hope present Diem–Hinh crisis will not be followed by further disruptive efforts and Diem will be allowed time consolidate his position and make necessary alterations his Government without French pressures.

Dept believes we should continue doing whatever possible support Diem's efforts. Today Admiral Radford informed Robertson he is afraid Hinh tool of French, we should throw full support behind Diem who has essential qualification of honesty and help him to extent possible. Radford informing O'Daniel accordingly.

DULLES

751G.00/9–1554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 15, 1954—9 p. m.

1030. Repeated information Paris 346. General Ely sent for me this morning and his first words were "Hinh must be gotten out of Vietnam". He said he was uninformed what had transpired in Hinh's interview with Diem yesterday. I said Foreign Minister Do told me he had understood that Hinh, while still saying he was ready to go, insisted he could not turn over his functions except to duly qualified officer and all officers heretofore approached by Diem had refused to accept job, even ad interim pending Hinh's return. Do thought Hinh had handled this thing with extreme cleverness whereas Diem and his Defense State Secretary Chan had handled it badly, creating impression among higher officers of Vietnamese Army that Diem's action against Hinh was unjustified attack on integrity of army and officer corps. Do saw no way out except dismissal of Chan, which might be sop to Hinh's vanity, since Hinh would not be dismissed but merely go on foreign mission. I suggested Diem might call in certain officers of general staff and talk to them in fatherly manner pointing out that Hinh was not being dismissed or downgraded and that he intended fully to preserve integrity of army. I thought Diem might say to these officers of National Army, which depended almost entirely on French support and American financial assistance, that continuance of refusal to take over in Hinh's absence would jeopardize this support. Ely agreed with me but he also shared my doubts that Diem had personality to impress officers. He asked me to see him after I had seen Diem.

I saw Diem this afternoon and said it was my feeling he must find some way to save Hinh's face, although latter did not deserve it, because of mistaken conviction of superior officers of Vietnamese National Army that Hinh's cause was theirs. I suggested he might call in certain officers and talk to them and I repeated suggestion I had made to Ely this morning. Diem did not reject this suggestion but neither did he accept it whole-heartedly. He said Hinh was coming to see him at 6:30 this evening and that he was having General Xuan with him. He hoped between them they could persuade Hinh to leave shortly. I said circumstances being what they were it was necessary to assure Hinh in good faith that he could come back after absence without diminution of rank or title. Diem said he would not repeat his previous promise to go to airport to see Hinh off because latter had not kept faith. I replied that, if it were necessary to get Hinh out of town, I thought he might well go to airport to see him off and, furthermore, if that would serve to persuade Hinh, that he might issue press statement making clear that Hinh was not being downgraded and would return to Vietnam after his mission to France.

Diem told me he was prepared to dismiss Chan and give Defense Ministry to General Xuan who also would be made Vice President.

HEATH

INR–NIE files

Special National Intelligence Estimate

SECRET WASHINGTON, 15 September 1954.

SNIE 63–6–54

CURRENT TRENDS IN SOUTH VIETNAM [1]

ESTIMATE

1. Since assuming office Premier Diem has been confronted with the usual problems of inefficiency, disunity, and corruption in Viet-

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, this estimate was "Submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence. The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

"Concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 15 September 1954. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the namese politics and with the extraordinary problems of a mass evacuation of the Northern population and the hostility of many French officials. Despite his qualities of honesty and zeal, he has not yet demonstrated the necessary ability to deal with practical problems of politics and administration. Lacking an organized political machine and finding control of the Army in the hands of an uncooperative chief of staff, Diem's freedom of action has been severely circumscribed.

2. The French Government appears to have no definite policy toward South Vietnam. While the French Government has not openly opposed the Diem Government, France has failed to support Diem and there is no evidence that the French are prepared to carry out a policy based on unreserved support for Vietnamese independence and nationalism. Accordingly, close cooperation between the French and Vietnamese governments, essential for the survival of South Vietnam, has been lacking and French motives have become more suspect.

3. Although little real progress has been made under Diem's administration in dealing with pressing political, military, and social problems, he still retains considerable unorganized popular support, particularly among Catholic elements of South Vietnam. He has also made some progress in reaching agreement with the powerful Cochin China sects.

4. At the moment the Diem Government is threatened by the insubordination of General Hinh, the politically ambitious Chief of Staff whom Diem has discharged. It does not now appear that the present struggle between Diem and Hinh will degenerate into civil strife. In fact Diem now appears to be making some headway in his efforts to control or exile Hinh, either of which would enhance his prestige and remove an obstacle to the strengthening of his government.

5. Bao Dai has remained in France and apparently is refraining from direct participation in political affairs in South Vietnam. His prestige among Vietnamese nationalists has been considerably lessened by his apathy toward the fate of his country. We believe that if Bao Dai were now to return to Vietnam, he would almost certainly become a center of political intrigue and would further complicate an already complex and confused situation and weaken rather than strengthen the ability of South Vietnam to achieve political stability.

IAC and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction."

The source text is accompanied by a memorandum of Sept. 17 from W. Park Armstrong, Special Assistant for Intelligence, to the Acting Secretary of State, which read as follows: "The attached special estimate was undertaken following discussion of the subject at the IAC on September 14. The DCI desired to have a brief, coordinated paper for delivery to the President and other members of the NSC."

6. Trends in South Vietnam since the end of the Geneva Conference have enhanced the prospects of an eventual extension of Communist control over the area by means short of large-scale military attacks. Although Diem's government will probably survive the present crisis of Hinh's insubordination, and may achieve greater strength and popular support, it will continue to be threatened by Vietminh activity, and hampered by French indecision. Diem appears to be the only figure now on the political scene behind whom genuine nationalist support can be mobilized. However, his ability to create a government that could reverse the current trend in South Vietnam depends at a minimum on an early and convincing demonstration by the French of their wholehearted support.

751G.13/9–1654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Viêtnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, September 16, 1954—3 p. m.

1036. Repeated information Paris 347. Limit distribution. Conflict between Diem and General Hinh has now reached point where clear-cut decision must be obtained. Matter has gone beyond question of whether Diem or Hinh wins out. Whole principle of supremacy civil authority over military is now at stake and will be decided within next few days by default if by no other means.

It is clear and established fact that French are not happy with Diem and would be only too glad to have him removed from picture. While I do not doubt impartiality and integrity General Ely, I believe there is little question some other French officials have been giving quiet encouragement if not unofficial support to Hinh in his defiance and intransigence. It is obvious that if Hinh succeeds in defying President's order to leave Diem's days will be numbered. None of French could be expected shed many tears over latter prospect.

If Hinh succeeds in defying President, army will become not latent political danger but open, strong, unpredictable factor contributing to continuing political instability. Having once found that it can make or break presidents, army could scarcely be expected refrain from trying maneuver again should occasion arise.

Even should face-saving compromise be reached with public exchange of expressions mutual esteem, confidence and support, and Hinh thereby succeed in remaining Saigon thus nullifying President's published order he take leave, Diem will have lost what authority and prestige remain to him. In short, should Hinh succeed in his present defiance of President, Diem can be expected have little authority in Vietnam beyond grounds his own palace.

With every day Hinh continues stall and appear get away with his defiance, influence and prestige of civil government is diminishing. By design or accident on part of Hinh and by bad handling on part of Diem, appearance of struggle between the two has shifted until it seems to be attack by Diem on National Army and integrity its officer corps, rather than effort remove temporarily from political scene a Chief of Staff who has been plotting treacherously against legal head of government. This impression is gaining credence and army can be expected rally more and more to Hinh if impasse continues. Whether Diem succeeds or fails, remains in office or falls from power, General Hinh must be removed from scene, temporarily at least, if principle of supremacy civil government is to be preserved in Free Vietnam.

HEATH

751G.13/9–1654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, September 16, 1954—10 p. m.

1052. Repeated information Paris 354. Diem had hour and half talk with Ely beginning at 11 o'clock today, after which he sent for me. To my question as to how matters stood between him and Hinh, he replied there was only one solution, summary dismissal (destitute) of Hinh. I inquired what would happen then. He said there would undoubtedly be bloodshed but that Hinh did not have real support of many officers or of many battalions and he thought chances were seven out of ten that Hinh would be defeated. He deplored possibility of bloodshed but in case of direct disobedience to constituted authority, actually rebellion, there was no other "clear" way of settling matter. I replied that, if he was certain, or even reasonably certain, of winning out in such struggle, that was of course one solution. I did not know exactly how many battalions he was sure of nor did I know whether he had available men successfully to command such enterprise. I inclined to doubt that he had such force or officers available. Diem replied that at least he had fifty/fifty chance, to which I rejoined that, even if he won, bloodshed would leave bitterness unless he were quickly and clearly victor. I said it seemed to me there were three things that could happen:

(1) He could win outright; (2) he could lose; or (3) French forces could intervene sufficiently in order to preserve order in streets and protect French lives and property, which would either prevent actual joining of battle with Hinh's forces or make it inconclusive leaving Hinh and problem still in Vietnam.

I said that if he lost an armed conflict with Hinh or the struggle remained inconclusive, then Diem and his government would also be lost. Not only government would be lost but Vietnamese military would conclude it could ride roughshod over civil authority. This would be most dangerous development—dangerous for army and dangerous for future of Vietnam.

On other hand, I said I understood a compromise solution had been arranged with Hinh (mytel 1043)[1] whereby General Xuan would be made Minister Defense, would select Hinh's interim successor, whereupon Hinh would leave in three or four days for France to stay probably two or three months. I understood solution also contemplated that Chan would offer his resignation. I recalled to Diem he had told me yesterday he was very favorably considering appointing Xuan as Defense Minister and he had also mentioned that Chan might resign to clear air. I said, while we would regret to see Chan leave under these circumstances, since he had been intelligent and energetic Secretary of Defense, he had certainly badly handled all negotiations with Hinh which to date had failed and he had, I believed, exceeded Diem's instructions. Chan's effort to take over radio station by force not only failed but might have provoked bloodshed. I recalled that [omission] me he was willing to assure Hinh that in going abroad he would not suffer diminution of rank or title. I said that if Hinh did leave under these conditions it would save latter's "face" but result would correctly be interpreted here as victory for Diem and his government. It would gain him time to establish himself with army and make necessary changes in its command. Diem then objected that Xuan insisted on being made vice president as well and that Xuan had ambitions to become president. I remarked that his claim to be made vice president was not unreasonable since he had formerly been president of Council and, if Xuan showed political ambitions which interfered with conduct of government, he could be dismissed. Diem admitted grudgingly that Xuan had incurred less enmity and unpopularity than other former Prime Ministers in Vietnam.

I strongly urged Diem to accept this settlement and remarked that if Hinh tried to change terms or back out of it pressure could then be brought to bear on Hinh. Above all I exhorted Diem to remain calm but decide quickly. He said he would decide this afternoon.

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[1] In telegram 1043 from Saigon, Sept. 16, Ambassador Heath presented a detailed report of his conversation that morning with Foreign Minister Tran Van Do regarding the political crisis. The Foreign Minister had visited General Hinh on behalf of President Diem during the evening of Sept. 15 in an effort to achieve a satisfactory compromise. (751G.13/9–1654)

This afternoon I went to see Ely at latter's request. He said he labored hour and half to persuade Diem to adopt some face-saving compromise with Hinh of kind I had discussed with Diem, but had found Diem very stubborn. Ely said he was uninformed of details of compromise which Do had arranged with Hinh. He was sending Daridan to call on Diem this afternoon and hoped he would persuade Diem to pacific settlement with Hinh. Ely remarked he more than doubted that in trial of military strength Diem would come out victor. He said if Hinh tried to withdraw from tentative arrangement he had made with Do he was pretty confident he could "persuade" Hinh to stand by agreement. In case Diem refused this agreement he hoped I would use my influence to induce him to accept it.

HEATH

751G.13/9–1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 17, 1954—4 p. m.

1061. Repeated Paris 360. French insistence that Diem take Tam into his Government as Minister Interior is reaching intensity which I think is dangerous not merely for Diem government but to building up any sort of regime here which will enjoy necessary popular support and credence. My telegram 1059 [1] reported that Ely during his long interview yesterday with Diem was insistent on Tam's admission to Cabinet. We now hear from Fishel who was sent to me by Diem that Daridan, who saw Diem last evening was even more insistent and explicit. He not only insisted that Diem must accept Tam in government but said that if he did, Diem's troubles with Hinh and sects would be over immediately, and implied that if he failed to do so, Diem's government would be out in matter of days.

Possible this second-hand account of interview is distorted, but I doubt it, since Ely and especially Daridan have been so insistent with me as to necessity of Tam. I thought I had talked Ely out of it but it appears I am wrong.

I have been puzzled by frenzied French espousal of Tam but suppose it is due to pressure of large French economic interests in Vietnam whose influence in Paris and here is extremely strong.

I think situation justifies strongest representations to French here and in Paris. Please instruct urgently.

HEATH

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[1] Telegram 1059 from Saigon, Sept. 17, regarding French support for Nguyen Van Tam, is not printed. (751G.13/9–1754)

751G.13/9–1754 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, September 17, 1954—7 : 55 p. m.
PRIORITY

997. Limit distribution. Saigon's 1052,[2] 1059,[3] 1061.[4] We are convinced the urgency of situation described in reference telegrams calls for strong and immediate measures by us. Since our past representation at other levels have been ignored, Achilles should call on Mendes or LaChambre as soon as possible and deliver personally following oral message:

"We have been most sympathetically collaborating with France with respect to a mutually satisfactory solution in Indochina. Our policies have taken into account the great sacrifices that France has in the past made in Indochina. The United States has no desire or intent to become involved in matters lying within the field of Franco-Vietnamese relations, but we are seriously disturbed at the present trend in Viet-Nam. We are informed that French authorities in Saigon have delivered a virtual ultimatum to Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, directing that he take into his government former Prime Minister Nguyen Van Tam. Diem has informed the U.S., and we believe your officials, that he will resign if such an act is enforced. Nevertheless we understand the efforts to force such a conclusion are not only continuing, on the part of French officials, but are increasing.

It was our impression that US and French representatives Saigon have of late had same views on Diem situation so it has come as shock and surprise that, according reports, French representatives are now making such concerted effort to force Tam into Diem Cabinet.

This action appears inconsistent with assurances given Embassy Paris that French Government is determined not pull strings or try force any Vietnamese Government out of office or into being (Embtel 873 repeated Saigon 94).[5]

To cause the Diem Government to fall by the forced inclusion of a Minister unacceptable to Diem would appear to be highly inconsistent with French assurances to the United States of the independence of Viet-Nam and would also deprive any successor government of the nationalist support indispensable to a viable government in Viet-Nam by the demonstration of foreign ability to appoint and remove its government at will.

We therefore earnestly hope that in giving this matter your full consideration you will agree concerning the extreme undesirability of attempting to force Diem to take Tam and issue accordingly instructions to your representatives in Saigon with the view of our continuing to work to prevent further deterioration of the political situation in Viet-Nam.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as priority telegram 1085.
[2] Dated Sept. 16, p. 2031.
[3] See footnote 1, *supra*.
[4] *Supra*.
[5] Dated Aug. 30, p. 1997.

There should be no misunderstanding regarding the fact that American aid could not be furnished to a government in Viet-Nam which failed to include substantial nationalist support." [6]

Paris should inform Saigon and Department of timing of delivery above message so that Heath can deliver simultaneously to Ely or deputy.

SMITH

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[6] In telegram 1164 from Paris, Sept. 18, Ambassador Dillon reported that in the absence of La Chambre, the message had been read to his private secretary at the Ministry for the Associated States. (751G.13/9–1854) Dillon further reported the following in telegram 1171 of the same day: "Message in Deptel 997 read to Mendes. He said he knew nothing about pressure to include Tam but Diem Government was clearly disintegrating. Diem's influence had been in north, but he had none in south nor in fact anywhere outside Saigon. It was important that US and France concert their policy with respect to Indochina rather than work at cross purposes. It was for this reason that he was sending Ely and La Chambre to Washington. He agreed to our request that he instruct French in Saigon to 'go easy' until Ely and La Chambre had had opportunity to discuss problem in Washington." (751G.13/9–1854)

751G.13/9–1854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (*Heath*) *to the Department of State*

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 18, 1954—midnight.

1103. Repeated information Paris 375. I have just had very disturbing interview with General Ely which, combined with Hinh's retreat from his promise to leave if Xuan were appointed Defense Minister and Bai Vien's statement to press in Paris yesterday re necessity of new government based on friendship with France, leads me to believe that Ely and Daridan as well as Paris are determined Diem must go.

Ely spoke in not very convincing tones, more of sorrow than of anger, saying that he had opposed Paris instructions, insisting instead that Diem be given another chance. In effect he had offered him another chance to form a strong government, but Diem, because of his stubbornness over Tam, had refused. Taking Xuan into government was not enough. He said Diem needed Tam. I remarked that we had certain respect for Tam's qualities but by no means believed he was only man who could handle police. Ely then said, "who can?" Since I did not care to divulge Diem's intentions of appointing Quat, I let conversation drop at this point. I feel almost sure word will get to Hinh from someone in Commissariat General that he can sit tight as Diem is on his way out.

Ely said thing he "feared" was that Bao Dai was going to put Diem "on the shelf" (limoger) and appoint another government. Bai Vien had gone to Cannes with "bags of gold" to aid in persuading Monarch to oust Diem.

I remarked Diem could hardly be criticized for not having formed new government immediately. This has been almost impossible as long as solution was lacking for conflict with Hinh. I said if his forecast of Bao Dai's intentions was correct, we would have to take a look at the composition and prospects of new government. US was spending huge sums here and this could only be justified if a regime could be formed capable of winning battle against communism. Such a regime would have to be authentic nationalist one. If the new regime were no more impressive than preceding Vietnamese governments, it would not be good enough.

I believe that mytel 1029, repeated information Paris 345[1] urging someone in Paris to sound out Bao Dai and convey this Embassy's opinion that he should hold off forming new regime at this precise moment was sound recommendation. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to keep abreast of situation here if we are not in touch with one of principal elements therein which Bao Dai still is.

I remarked that if assumption Bao Dai intends appoint new government were correct, that would presumably mean Hinh would stay on. Ely replied that would depend on composition of new government. I recalled to Ely that we had both expressed doubts that Hinh was man to form and lead national army of caliber which both France and US desire, not to mention that he had taken Vietnamese Army into politics.

Some time ago France had agreed that post-Geneva Government must be a nationalist government. After experience with Diem's Nationalist regime French have obviously abandoned that idea. Their former insistence on Huu and their recent insistence on Tam is evidence. No government containing either of these two men could be, by any stretch of the imagination, called nationalist.

I do not entirely blame the French for dropping Diem since latter has been irritating to them and politically woefully inept. I feel we have been right in insisting that a definitely nationalist government be created here. I feel that if French would throw their support to Diem he might possibly make a success still but that is unlikely without exertion of extreme pressure on our side. Our proposition that there is no good successor for Diem at this precise juncture remains true. Perhaps Tran Van Lam, Governor of south Vietnam, might have makings of "dark horse successor," but he would have to be groomed for it as it is his first entrance into politics. Quat would seem to be too much the northerner and is disliked by sects. There would seem still to be extremely faint chance that Diem will be able to persuade Hoa Hao and Cao Daists to participate in new government. Against such faint possibility is fact that armies of these sects are on French payroll, and that sects themselves, if they see Diem approaching end of his rope, may back off from any agreement.

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[1] See footnote 1, p. 2025.

HEATH

751G.13/9–1954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 19, 1954—4 p. m.

1110. Repeated information niact Paris 381. I have just seen General Ely who sounded very convincing when he said he had no foreknowledge that Hinh was going into open rebellion against the authority of the government.[1] He speculated that Hinh's action was due to a secret message from Bay Vien who arrives this afternoon. Ely says that he is absolutely without information as to Bao Dai's instructions to Vien but he believes that the instructions direct the sects to issue a joint declaration, he said, asserting the failure of the Diem Government and inviting it to resign.

Ely said that he is summoning Bay Vien immediately on his arrival. If he learns that Bay Vien has instructions for a new government, he will tell him three things: (1) there must be [no] disorder accompanying a change of government since that would only be to the benefit of the Viet Minh; (2) that any new government must be of a character to merit recognition of France, United States, and other countries; and (3) if a new regime is to be installed and even if it is recognized it cannot count on the support of France and other countries unless it demonstrates its efficiency.

Ely is leaving tomorrow morning for France with the idea of accompanying La Chambre to Washington.

I conveyed to Ely the substance of Department telegram 1085 sent Paris 997[2] although certain aspects of it have been overtaken by events. I emphasized the concluding sentence of the message.

HEATH

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[1] In telegram 1107 from Saigon, Sept. 19, Ambassador Heath reported that General Hinh had released a message which he had sent to Bao Dai in effect asking the Chief of State to dismiss Diem and to turn to the sects for the formation of a new government. (751G.00/9–1954)

[2] For the reference telegram, Sept. 17, see p. 2034. In telegram 1122 from Saigon, Sept. 20, Heath reported that General Ely had complained bitterly to him regarding the communication contained in the reference telegram which he regarded as critical of him personally. Ely had stated that unless there was some word from Washington correcting the accusation that he had acted improperly, he would not accompany La Chambre to Washington for discussions on Indochina. (751G.13/9–2054) In telegram 1022 to Paris, Sept. 20, the Department instructed the Embassy to provide General Ely with assurances of the confidence of the United States in his ability and fairness. (751G.13/9–2054)

751G.13/9–1954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 19, 1954—midnight.

1119. Repeated information Paris 382. As Fishel had determined that Diem would be willing to make one more attempt at reconciliation with General Hinh, but only on condition that Hinh publicly expressed regrets for his actions, I instructed General O'Daniel and Counselor Kidder call on Hinh to determine his attitude. Speedy action was essential as Diem was due to give press conference at 9:30 this evening. O'Daniel and Kidder saw Hinh at 8:30 and asked him what reaction would be to the suggestion of reconciliation with Diem.

By way of reply Hinh explained his position as a "moral prisoner of the army", said that Diem and his government without any remaining support in country, that he had twice attempted to reach reconciliation with Diem, that it had been at his suggestion General Xuan had been appointed Defense Minister but that one hour after Xuan had taken over as Defense Minister Xuan had telephoned him to order him to leave the country on Monday[1] or at the latest on Wednesday. In addition to this Secretary of State for Defense Chan remained in Ministry of Defense and would leave only after Hinh left country. Hinh then referred to his press release which consisted of telegram which he had sent to Bao Dai (see Embtel 1107).[2] He pointed out that this was a clear statement and on General O'Daniel's commenting it left a loophole because Hinh had said that "up to now" he had not opposed the government, Hinh pointed out that his release constituted opposition of the government. Hinh sees only three solutions:

1. Diem goes and Hinh remains.
2. Hinh goes and Diem remains.
3. Diem totally reconstitutes his cabinet leaving himself as powerless figurehead.

Hinh was convinced, however, that Diem would accept only the solution of Hinh going and Hinh was not going to leave the country. General O'Daniel reiterated his previous suggestions regarding Hinh acting as Chief of Staff of Armed Forces with Xuan as Defense Minister under Diem and elaborated on this theme at considerable length. Hinh was not receptive. . . .

Hinh admitted frankly that he was opposing civil authority and stated that it was not he acting for the Army, but that it was the entire Army acting through him. He even admitted that what he was doing would benefit Viet Minh enemy but said situation so bad action must be taken.

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[1] Sept. 20.

[2] See footnote 1, *supra*.

It was made clear to Hinh that we regretted the situation in which he had placed the country and also that we understood that Diem's receptiveness to a possible reconciliation would be based upon a public expression of regret for his actions culminating in his statement against the government. Hinh's position that he would not back down was crystal clear. He commented that it is "too late" and that tomorrow there would be movements by the sects in the city. Also three of Diem's Ministers might resign tomorrow.

Hinh looked exhausted and deeply troubled but was firm. His chief bitterness was directed against Chan. He spoke of Diem as good man but total failure.

HEATH

751G.13/9–2054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 20, 1954—7 p. m.

1125. Repeated information Paris 386. [Name deleted] came to see me this morning to discuss urgent problem. He began conversation by saying "General Hinh plans to carry out a *coup d'etat* tomorrow".

[Name deleted] said that Binh Xuyen General Le Van Vien who returned September 18 from Paris was cautioning Hinh against use of force. Hinh was planning send battalion National Army troops to lay siege Palais Norodom September 21 and force resignation Diem. General Vien argued this would not be necessary as he had another plan ostensibly approved by Bao Dai. General Vien's plan was to call representatives all sects together his headquarters this evening and persuade them sign message to Diem publicly calling for his resignation. In addition to Binh Xuyen, he hoped obtain support Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Catholic groups led by Bishop Le Huu Tu. At this moment, according to [name deleted], General Vien was sending emissaries to General Xuan and other members Diem Cabinet demanding they resign and threatening them if they failed to do so. Extent of progress made by Binh Xuyen leader evident from fact Diem's Minister of Agriculture attended conference General Vien's headquarters this morning.

. . . .

. . . As soon as Hoa Hao General Soai arrives Saigon, possibly this evening, Cao Dai and Hoa Hao are ready reach firm agreement with Diem enter his government and give him their support. They are then ready make public declaration they are cooperating with and supporting Diem government.

[Name deleted] is confident that Hinh feels secure in move against Diem so long as he believes confessional groups can be won to his side or will remain neutral. Once sects have made public declaration they support Diem, Hinh will be in mood to "be reasoned with". [Name deleted] said Hinh is aware Cao Daists have fanatical followers at their disposal and will be aware "his life will be in danger" if he does not listen to reason.

[Name deleted] suggestion for resolving conflict with Hinh is that following agreement with Diem confessional generals will call on Hinh and put pressure on him. [Name deleted] believes Hinh must leave country "within a week" and that Diem must make public decree simultaneously announcing Hinh will be made "Commander-in-Chief" upon his return. In position of Commander-in-Chief Hinh will be remote from direct command, Chief of Staff can be "neutral officer" such as current Vietnamese Military Attaché Washington (described as not very effective but neutral) and general staff can become "combined staff" containing representation from sectarian forces.

[Name deleted] reaffirmed fact confessional groups not enthusiastic about Diem but see no better man to lead country at this time. He stated Diem still has high reputation among common people as man of integrity and fervent nationalist. Diem's recent firmness in resisting French pressure appoint Tam Interior Minister and his firm refusal bow to French in this matter had, according to [name deleted], reinforced his prestige. . . .

I explained to [name deleted] that as Diem's is legally constituted government of Vietnam, US has been and is continuing support Diem. French have stated they would not recognize government brought into power by force and we ourselves would find it very difficult recognize or support government created by such means.

I will see Daridan, who is acting in Ely's absence, today and tell him we have information Hinh planning *coup d'etat* tomorrow, reminding Daridan he had said he would talk firmly to Hinh should such a coup appear imminent. I saw Diem this afternoon to urge him once more act quickly, firmly and personally in order arrive at agreement with sects. I told him if he did not act quickly, preferably today, it may be too late.

I believe this is first promising ray of hope we have had in recent days that deteriorating situation may yet be saved and government headed by Diem and enjoying some measure of support may yet emerge. It remains uncertain that Diem, with his hesitancy and ineptness, will be able to grasp this opportunity and give leadership to such a government.

HEATH

751G.13/9–2154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, September 21, 1954—5 p. m.

1143. Repeated information Paris 390. As Embassy had received report (Embtel 1125 repeated Paris 386)[1] General Hinh preparing *coup de force* for today, Counselor Kidder was instructed call on Hinh in company General O'Daniel last night to make crystal clear fact that any use force against legal government would necessitate review of entire US policy towards remaining Vietnam. Point emphasized US desires do everything possible support remaining Vietnam, but only on condition country unified in face common danger.

Hinh protested strongly he had no intention use force either on his own behalf or on behalf anyone else against government. He reiterated he has no personal political ambition, that more than anything else he would be delighted if he could retire and go to Beaux Arts in Paris. However, he said his retiring would serve no useful purpose for country as present situation with inefficient government which must be replaced would be unchanged.

Balance of conversation was carried by General O'Daniel who once again attempted persuade Hinh that he should follow role proper to military and leave matters relating to civilian government to civilians.

Hinh's view on this that situation so serious and pressure of army on him so strong that it too late. Nevertheless in reply to query re what type of government he would visualize to replace Diem, he stated evasively he a military man and that not his province.

Reply from Bao Dai to Hinh's telegram (see Embtel 1107 repeated Paris 378)[2] broadcast over local radio this morning is limited to innocuous statement appreciation Hinh's expression esteem for His Majesty's intention, in interest of National Army, look into problem posed by Hinh. Bao Dai's message cannot be considered in any sense rebuke of Hinh.

HEATH

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[1] *Supra.*

[2] See footnote 1, p. 2037.

751G.13/9–2154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 21, 1954—7 p. m.

1150. Repeated information priority Paris 395. [Name deleted] came to see Embassy First Secretary this morning to report serious new developments in political crisis. Confessional leaders had met with General Le Van Vien at Binh Xuyen Headquarters at 8 a. m. September 21. General Hinh was among those present. At this meeting General Vien attempted persuade sects to join him in public announcement calling upon Diem to resign and appealing to Bao Dai appoint coalition government of sects headed by General Vien himself.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

At 10 a. m. General Salan had summoned Hoa Hao General Soai and at 11 a. m. he had called in Cao Dai General Phuong, . . . In his talks with these confessional leaders General Salan . . . said General Le Van Vien had mandate from Bao Dai form new government based on coalition of sects. [Name deleted] said General Salan told them confessional groups "must join Le Van Vien and cooperate with him in their own best interests." General Salan is further reported to have said that this change of government had full American approval as "Washington had agreed with La Chambre."

[Name deleted] pointed out to Embassy officer that agreement by Cao Dai and Hoa Hao to support Diem and join his government was only hours away. . . . Meeting between leaders these two sects and Diem was set for 3 p. m. this afternoon, . . . News of this near agreement had been deliberately leaked to press . . . and small article had already been printed on front page *L'Union Francaise*, Saigon newspaper, this morning.

[Name deleted] was deeply disturbed that this coalition government dominated by Binh Xuyen and headed by General Le Van Vien had indeed received American approval. He was assured that this was not true. He was fearful that if sects disregarded admonitions General Salan to support General Vien and instead carried out their intention support Diem, there might be disorders and bloodshed. He feared Binh Xuyen or possibly National Army would storm Presidential palace. He suggested that if Cao Dai and Hoa Hao joined Diem Government, Diem seek refuge either "at MAAG Headquarters or with Cao Dai at Tay Ninh," leaving Foreign Minister Tran Van Do as his deputy in Saigon. He was told that it was out of question for MAAG to grant asylum to President.

While [name deleted] spoke, General Soai and General Phuong, who had gone directly to Binh Xuyen Headquarters from their interviews with General Salan, were closeted with General Vien, but according [name deleted], were awaiting verification American attitude as reported by General Salan.

Above information was immediately conveyed to Counselor Kidder who was called out for purpose from office of Acting Commissioner General Daridan on whom Minister to Laos Yost was making official call. On Counselor's return to rejoin Yost and Daridan, latter immediately commented that he had just had telephone call from General

Salan who was complaining about danger inherent in demonstrations being inspired by Diem. Daridan commented that Diem might start serious trouble and was acting irresponsibly, and said influence should be brought to bear on him to cease demonstrations, in one of which Diem's sister-in-law had been seen taking part. (Word was subsequently sent to Fishel to ask him to call to attention of Diem that these demonstrations are serving no useful purpose but are potential sources of danger and are causing unfavorable reactions). Counselor then informed Daridan that he had just then learned from a usually reliable source report as set out above concerning alleged activities of General Salan. Daridan immediately countered by saying he could assure us if Salan had seen representatives of sects it would be for purpose of urging them to be united. He could guarantee Salan would not implicate US in any way in any conversations that he might have had. Counselor said Embassy understands Hoa Hao and Cao Dai on verge of possible satisfactory solution in support of a strengthened Diem Government and that we believe it an excellent sign. Any action to bring Binh Xuyen, an organization without popular support of any kind, into power would be serious. US would view it with concern and it should at all costs be avoided. This point reiterated with emphasis on unfavorable view of Binh Xuyen taken by US.

Daridan stated he does not believe General Hinh would start trouble but speculated serious trouble might result if deadlock reached between Diem and his followers and Hinh and any sects possibly allied with him. He twice said Diem can't be given another chance if he is not successful today in his attempt to establish his reinvigorated government. Counselor pointed out that to encourage Binh Xuyen at this point, when two other sects were attempting to cooperate with Diem and apparently determined not to let ambitious Binh Xuyen get upper hand, would be most unfortunate.

At 1:15 [name deleted] telephoned Embassy First Secretary to enquire results Counselor Kidder's conversation with Daridan. He especially enquired as to whether or not Daridan knew anything of reported "mandate from Bao Dai to General Vien to form new government". He was informed that story he had told Embassy officer had been reported in general terms Daridan and that Daridan apparently knew of no such mandate to General Vien. As far as Embassy could tell, Daridan's information as to status General Vien, remained that which General Vien had imparted to Ely upon his return from Paris, namely that Bao Dai had asked Vien study situation and report with recommendations to Bao Dai.

[Name deleted] then enquired if it were "all right for Cao Dai and Hoa Hao to go ahead with plan to support Diem". [Name deleted] was informed that Embassy saw no reason for confessional groups to change their plan support Diem if this was their intention but that Cao Dai and Hoa Hao would have to make up their own minds.[2]

HEATH

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[2] In telegram 1166 from Saigon, Sept. 22, the Embassy reported that in addition to its contacts with the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao representatives on Sept. 21, a group of Binh Xuyen leaders had been apprised that evening of the U.S. position. (751G.13/9–2254)

751G.13/9–2154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 21, 1954—7 p. m.

1154. Repeated information Paris 397. Reference Embtel 1150, repeated Paris 395.[1] Counselor and chief political section received visit this afternoon from [name deleted] of Cao Daists and [name deleted] representing General Soai of Hoa Hao forces who wished verification from Embassy that US had not changed point of view regarding support of Diem Government. . . . said that at meeting today of General Le Van Vien with General Phuong of Cao Dai and General Soai, Le Van Vien had said he had received mandate from Bao Dai to return to Vietnam to form new government to replace that of Diem, and that he had received support from Guy La Chambre. Le Van Vien said in reply to his question to La Chambre re American point of view, latter had advised him to return to Saigon where he "would find that there was something changed" in American point of view. [Name deleted] made direct inquiry re US position.

Counselor told visitors that US position has not changed, that we continue to support legal government, that we would view with extreme disfavor any use of force to change government, that US not wedded to any particular government, but that even in case of legal and peaceful change US would have to take look at new government, its representative nature and its anti-Communist orientation and review our position on military and economic aid in light of findings. Counselor said he had no knowledge of any mandate granted Le Van Vien.[2]

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[1] *Supra.*

[2] In telegram 1144 to Saigon, Sept. 21 (1038 to Paris), the Department indicated the following in regard to telegrams 1150 and 1154 from Saigon: "Department reaffirms position Embassy has taken in 1150 and desires those principally concerned—particularly Daridan and Salan—know that U.S. position has not changed. We have not informed La Chambre of any change. We support as a solution to current crisis Cao Dai and Hoa Hao joining Diem Government they reportedly already having made decisions to do so. We hope they can publicly announce such intention soon as possible. We are not supporting a Binh Xuyen plot." (751G.13/9–2154)

[Name deleted] seemed fully satisfied and assured Counselor Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects now in full accord on desirability support Diem. He believed new government including two sects would be formed and announced within two or three days. Counselor emphasized personal view time extremely precious and that decision should be taken and implemented today if possible.

[Name deleted] commented on fact there is obvious difference of policy between General Ely, who is always correct, on one side, and General Salan and various unnamed French civil servants on other. He remarked wistfully that Ely had encouraged Hoa Hao to cooperate with Diem government but that when Salan counseled them to contrary, it made them "dizzy."

HEATH

751G.13/9–2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 22, 1954—6 p. m.

1168. Repeated information priority Paris 407. On returning from farewell visit Phnom Penh this morning, I was informed that Daridan wanted to see me this afternoon. After extreme difficulty we managed to get through to him with message I had to see him this morning. I finally saw him this noon. Daridan said he had just seen representatives of Cao Dai and Hoa Hao who asked his advice whether they should enter Diem Government. Daridan says he told them French interests here were considerable, but they could be liquidated, and France would not be essentially the poorer. Therefore, French were not going to interfere or undertake responsibility in such matters. He said if two sects were determined to go into Diem Government to do so immediately, and if not to say so immediately, since this uncertain situation should not persist.

Next part of conversation was not so explicit but I certainly got impression that Daridan gave his personal opinion to representatives of sects that entering Diem Government would be losing venture for Vietnam. Daridan then said if sects did not go into Diem Government they should get together on candidate acceptable to all sects. Representatives hesitated minute and said, according to Daridan, "we know our strength, we know our weakness, and our weakness is that we can never agree on one candidate to head government." Then Daridan claimed his concluding advice to them was whether or not they went into Diem Government to "make your decision today." Thereupon he claims they left decided not to enter Diem Government.

I said I found this very confusing since last time we had seen representatives of Hoa Hao and Cao Dai, who had called to ascertain position of US Government, which we had explained was supporting Diem as legally constituted authority, representatives said to us they had definite intention of going into Government. I then told Daridan I had more definite information now as to US stand and I gave him substance of Deptel 1144 repeated Paris 1038.[1] I said it was regrettable that here there was very definite difference of opinion between France and US as to Diem Government; that it was necessary that we should move together in interest of building something solid in Vietnam. Fact remained just as I had often said to Ely, and no one had ever been able to challenge it, that there was in sight at this time no acceptable alternative candidate to Diem as head of Government. There was no Vietnamese who enjoyed national reputation for honesty and nationalist patriotism. Two of the sects were willing to work with Diem and Binh Xuyen I hoped might go along if they were maintained in their control of police, which for moment other sects in general were willing to allow. Hinh in his press conference had very cleverly left himself loophole of conciliation with Diem Government. Diem in his press statements, and from what I understood of his present attitude, was willing to come to some compromise with Hinh. I am not sure that any such coalition would last or be effective, but I am sure that any government coming out of a Hinh–Binh Xuyen coalition was damned and doomed from start. If Diem mishandled his new government, obviously he would have to go. Certainly we should know in month. To be sure we had no time to lose, but all would be lost if an impossible government took over now.

Daridan said "my own conviction is that Diem will lose this country; he is so damned stubborn." I said his stubbornness had been ground down considerably these days and that I gave him a chance. Daridan ended conversation by saying, rather angrily, "all right, but Diem must form his new government today because situation is explosive and furthermore any such coalition must include Binh Xuyen and Army if it is to have any chance of succeeding."[2]

HEATH

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[1] For text, see footnote 2, *supra*.

[2] Telegram 1183 to Saigon (1078 to Paris), Sept. 23, read as follows: "Saigon 1168. Department gratified at prompt and we hope effective line taken with Daridan. Your third paragraph summary of situation, without suitable alternative candidate, corresponds views of Department.

"We similarly hope that the reiteration of our unchanged policy Deptel 1144 in combination with urgent approach to Bao Dai directed in telegram to Paris today will influence sects throw their support Diem." (751G.13/9–2254) Reference is to telegram 1063 to Paris, Sept. 23, p. 2052.

751G.13/9–2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, September 22, 1954—7 p. m.

1226. Repeated information priority Saigon 143. Deptel 1022 (Saigon 1126).[1] We had most cordial talk with Ely this afternoon and assured him along lines indicated reftel. He expressed appreciation and told us he would participate Washington talks. However, he now plans leave Paris Friday[2] or Saturday rather than Thursday eve with La Chambre. We have informed Ely (as well as La Chambre) Dept has agreed La Chambre's suggestion that political talks begin 27th.

Ely assured us he had had no instructions from Paris to insist upon Diem taking Tam into his govt, and that it had not been his intention give Diem impression French endeavoring force Tam upon him. Ely said he had endeavored advise Diem to best his ability, that he had been under impression we fully cognizant his (Ely's) views, and that he unaware we had interpreted French efforts advise Diem Saigon as being in nature "virtual ultimatum". Ely emphasized Fr Govt has no intention intervening Vietnamese internal political affairs. Ely said that while he held Diem in esteem personally, impossible escape fact present Vietnamese Govt represents "zero". On other hand, while he (Ely) recognizes Bao Dai's present emissary Saigon Gen Bai Vien is "little more than gangster", he doubts if any successor govt could be worse than present one. Ely asked what we thought of Bao Dai, and while he inclined agree with us it would be desirable if he (Bao Dai) could be eliminated from scene, he intimated that we may all find that we may have to work with him for time being in absence better alternate. In any event, Ely said he strongly of opinion that forthcoming talks Washington would be invaluable in serving clarify Franco-American objectives IC. Ely said he thought it would be helpful if Heath were to be present for talks, and we said we would pass on his suggestion with sole notation that it might be difficult for him leave Saigon this critical juncture. Ely spoke in highest terms Heath and cordiality their relationships.

We impressed by Ely's calm forthright approach IC problem and his evident desire reach understanding with US. We believe his participation Washington talks, particularly political phase, will prove to be of prime importance in achieving fuller Franco-American understanding on IC.

Col Derougemont, who present during conversation, confirmed to us as we left that Gen Vien, apparently with authority Bao Dai, presently endeavoring achieve sect–Army coalition. Latter would demand Diem resign and ask Bao Dai form new govt.

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[1] See footnote 2, p. 2037.
[2] Sept. 24.

DILLON

751G.13/9–2354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 23, 1954—3 p. m.

1176. Repeated information Paris niact 408. Following is translation of pertinent excerpts from telegram from Bao Dai to Diem received just before noon here today:

> "In the circumstances, et cetera His Majesty with aim of restoring to you all initiative with regard to him has directed me to inform you 'that he would be willing voluntarily to relieve you if that is your desire from the oath of fidelity and continuity which you spontaneously gave him'. His Majesty hopes that this new attitude in regard to him, et cetera may facilitate your decision in case you judge it necessary to free yourself from your heavy burden in face of a situation whose complexity you are perfectly qualified to appreciate."

In other words, Diem is politely asked to resign. Diem interprets this reference to oath from which Bao Dai frees him as that taken by latter to preserve monarchy. It may, however, be simply his oath of office as Prime Minister.

Diem is wiring back that His Majesty is badly informed regarding "complexity of situation"; that he is on eve of announcing reorganization of his government with participation of sects and outstanding nationalists. He is further stating it is his understanding this reorganized government will have support of US and latter would not support regime which came into power by force.

I again urgently recommend that Paris should immediately say to Bao Dai that he should refrain from or at least postpone his insistence on Diem's resignation at this moment when latter is on point of forming government supported by sects. There is really no time to lose.

HEATH

751G.13/9–2354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 23, 1954—5 p. m.

1185. Repeated information priority Paris 410. In order make clear US position current political crisis and also determine their own attitudes more exactly, I sent word September 22 to Hoa Hao, General

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

Soai and Cao Dai General Phuong that I would like to see them. General Soai was reported to be out of town in Can Tho. In absence Soai, General Phuong, instead of meeting with me, requested Embassy First Secretary come to talk with him and Hoa Hao representatives at Cao Dai headquarters Saigon evening September 22.

Embassy officer conferred with me prior to appointment with representatives sects and I emphasized time had come to make US view clear and unequivocal.

Embassy officer found General Phuong flanked by two Hoa Hao representatives and two Cao Dai supporters. General Phuong apologized for fact General Soai not in Saigon and therefore two generals unable respond together to Ambassador's request they come to see him. He enquired as to purpose of Ambassador's request. Embassy officer replied that Ambassador had wished make very clear position of US in current crisis inasmuch as there had been conflicting statements regarding American attitude and there was danger some uncertainty still existed. He enquired as to current intentions of Cao Dai and Hoa Hao.

Hoa Hao representative said there were four elements of strength in present problem: Cao Dai; Hoa Hao; Binh Xuyen; and National Army. Sects believed that at least three of these elements must join Diem if he were to have chance form stable government. Hoa Hao spokesman said Cao Dai and Hoa Hao were now unwilling join Diem until Diem made his peace with General Hinh and obtained support and cooperation National Army. They were afraid that if they joined Diem Government, Hinh might launch armed attack on government.

Embassy officer pointed out that Hinh had been urged both by French and US not to use force in his controversy with Diem, that Hinh had not attacked government in its present position of powerlessness, that there was less reason to believe Hinh might attack government should it acquire some strength by virture Hoa Hao and Cao Dai support and participation. By joining Diem Government sects would place it in position of some strength from which it might have better chance negotiate solution of problem with Hinh. By insisting on condition Diem first resolve difficulties with Hinh prior to support of sects confessional groups were in effect condemning Diem Government to fall.

Sects wanted to know if US would give "guarantee" against use of force by General Hinh against government. It was pointed out to them no one could give such a "guarantee" but the factors working against such a move on part of Hinh were also made clear to them. Hinh was intelligent man and knew both US and French opposed use of force and would find it difficult recognize or support regime brought into office by use of force from whatever quarter. Hinh further knew that his army must be fed, clothed and paid and that without outside assistance he could not expect maintain army.

Sects next raised problem Hinh's status itself, saying Hinh must remain and President must rescind his order directing Chief of Staff to leave country. Embassy officer went into some detail explaining value placed on principle supremacy of civil government over military in democratic countries. He expressed as personal view ideal solution would be for Hinh, retaining full rank and privileges, to leave country in dignified manner for period three weeks to month. Meanwhile sects would have joined Diem Government and revised government would have had opportunity demonstrate whether or not it was capable providing leadership and strength to free Vietnam. One of Hinh's objections to government had been its ineffectiveness and inactivity. Should government show substantial progress before his return one of Hinh's objections might be removed. Government would further be in position of strength to negotiate equitable reconciliation with him. To expression of view by sects that this would be desirable and "good solution" but that they believed Hinh would refuse to leave, Embassy officer replied that whether or not this solution were practicable, government must be placed in position of some strength from which it could move forward at once on constructive program and that, whatever the arrangement with General Hinh, it could be worked out in meantime.

Hoa Hao representatives next raised question as to just what US policy is at this moment since "French representatives" had told them US policy was "changing". Embassy officer replied he felt time had come to speak with brutal frankness. US believed that whoever headed government at this critical time must be honest and must be a patriot. We held no brief for Ngo Dinh Diem himself but at this time saw no one else in sight who had better opportunity, provided he had support of sects, to provide necessary leadership and program build strength in free Vietnam. We recognized while Diem honest and a nationalist, he had also up until present been inactive and ineffective. US had no intention stubbornly support incompetent or ineffective government, but felt that government headed by Diem with support and participation of sects provided best chance of success at this time. Should sects join Diem government and give it their support they must realize it would not be matter their passively accepting honors and position, but they would share with Diem responsibility for demonstrating leadership and progress. It had been policy of US to support Diem government and US was still supporting idea of Diem government including participation of sects. If such a government did not produce results and show progress within reasonable period of time, US would naturally wish re-examine its position.

US does not support any Binh Xuyen plot to overthrow present government and establish Xuyen-dominated government. We believe Binh Xuyen at this time does not have qualities required by situation.

US does not support any move by General Hinh to overthrow government and establish new government based on Army. We believe General Hinh and National Army at this time do not possess qualities for successful leadership of entire nation. US does believe that Diem government with participation of sects presently offers best chance for success.

Hoa Hao then raised fear French authorities might cut off their subsidies should sects support Diem against French advice. Embassy officer said, speaking frankly, it must be recognized bulk of French efforts Indochina was supported by US aid. He made no attempt to predict French reaction and said problem could be examined should it arise.

Embassy officer asked General Phuong what advice General Ely had given him last time Phuong had spoken to Commissioner General. Phuong replied Ely had advised sects to cooperate with Diem government. Embassy officer suggested sects follow Ely's advice. Both sects replied advice they had received subsequently from both French military and civil authorities had not been consistent with that which General Ely had given them. Embassy officer remarked General Ely had presumably not changed his own advice and certainly after this discussion US position should be clear.

Hoa Hao representatives said General Soai could not return Saigon before afternoon September 23 at which time he and General Phuong would meet to reach decision. Embassy officer enquired as to what that decision might be expected to be and what recommendations Hoa Hao representatives then present would give General Soai. Hoa Hao spokesman said he completely convinced necessity cooperation by Cao Dai and Hoa Hao with Diem government, that by insisting on prior "acts of strength" by Diem such as agreement with General Hinh before sects would participate in government, sects were in reality perpetuating "a vicious circle," that his recommendation to General Soai would be that Cao Dai and Hoa Hao should participate in Diem government at once and give it their support. General Phuong reiterated Cao Dai stands ready cooperate with Diem.

Embassy officer expressed regret General Soai could not be in Saigon before late September 23 and reminded confessional leaders that while Diem, sects and National Army, all of whom were patriotic Vietnamese devoted to best interests their country, wasted time in unseemly squabbles, Vietnam was being lost hour by hour to Viet Minh. If all patriotic elements Vietnam did not unite promptly to work for salvation Vietnam there was a good likelihood their country would be lost and they with it.

HEATH

751G.13/9–2254 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, September 23, 1954—9:37 a. m.
NIACT

1063. Saigon 1150 repeated Paris 395, Saigon 1154 repeated Paris 397. Saigon 1165 repeated Paris 405.[2] Under changed circumstances Department believes time has come notify Bao Dai of our policy regarding political situation Saigon. Department previously refrained from approaching Bao Dai on subject Diem government for reason given our 1038 to Saigon repeated Paris 962.[3] However Department desires Embassy Paris send representative Bao Dai soonest to make following points:

1. As stated our 1044 [*1144*] to Saigon repeated Paris 1038 [4] we support sects joining Diem government and hope this can be arranged as soon as possible, as contribution toward government based on nationalist aspirations of people and which would vigorously oppose Communist infiltration to gain control free Vietnam. We believe such government should be given chance attack urgent problems.
2. US position support government of Diem is not changed. We understand Cao Dai and Hoa Hao on point joining Diem government which affords at least temporary solution current crisis.
3. We have information General Le Van Vien is telling Cao Dai and Hoa Hao he has mandate from Bao Dai end Diem government and form one himself.
4. US does not intend in future any more than in past to intervene internal matters Vietnam. Yet instability and absence of government and efforts prevent formation broadly based administration around Diem are seriously limiting a development of US policy with respect free Vietnam. Therefore we sincerely hope Diem can be encouraged continue in office with broadened representation of his selection with support of nationalist elements to strengthen free Vietnam and resist Communist efforts seize control.

AmEmbassy Paris should inform AmEmbassy Saigon regarding timing delivery above note so Saigon could inform Diem this action.

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[1] Drafted by Kenneth T. Young (Acting Director) and Robert Hoey of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as niact telegram 1172.

[2] For telegrams 1150 and 1154 from Saigon, Sept. 21, see pp. 2041 and 2044, respectively. In telegram 1165 of Sept. 22, not printed, Ambassador Heath reiterated his request that the Embassy in Paris sound out Bao Dai. (751G.13/9–2254)

[3] See footnote 1, p. 2025.

[4] See footnote 2 to telegram 1154, p. 2044.

French Foreign Office should be notified of substance message. We do not believe note should be publicized.[5]

SMITH

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[5] In telegram 1233 from Paris, Sept. 23, Ambassador Dillon again expressed his opposition to an approach to Bao Dai. The telegram concluded as follows: "We continue to feel here that there is some merit in French position, namely that any hope maintaining free Vietnamese state depends at this stage in good measure on Franco-American cooperation and that unilateral action by either country might well work to disadvantage longer term interests Vietnam." (751G.13/9–2354) The Department replied in telegram 1074 to Paris (1181 to Saigon), also Sept. 23, that the fall of the Diem government prior to or during the Washington talks would immeasurably complicate matters and endanger the ability of the United States to provide aid. To avoid this, it was necessary to either approach Bao Dai directly or to ask the French to use their influence with him to stabilize the situation. The question should be discussed with the French who should be made aware that the United States was prepared to confront Bao Dai if France was unable to achieve the desired result. (751.13/9–2354)

The matter was discussed in Paris with General Ely on Sept. 24. Ambassador Dillon reported in telegram 1256 of the same date that it had been agreed with the General that Maurice Dejean, former Commissioner General in Indochina, should see Bao Dai to counsel him against making any move which might place in jeopardy the Diem government prior to the conclusion of the Washington talks. (751G.13/9–2454) Meanwhile, in telegram 1204 from Saigon, Sept. 24, Ambassador Heath expressed his disagreement with the course of action being pursued, contending that the French could not be relied upon to influence Bao Dai in a manner consistent with the position of the United States. (751G.13/9–2454)

751G.5/9–2354

Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to the President

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] September 23, 1954.

Subject: Suggested Letters from the President to the Prime Minister of Viet-Nam and the King of Cambodia[1]

The Departments of State and Defense believe that prompt action must be taken to reassure the Vietnamese Prime Minister of United States intent to aid free Viet-Nam in order that he may take the necessary steps to establish a strong and stable government capable of resisting Communist pressures. In keeping with the policy outlined in my recent message to Mendes-France I recommend that you send a letter to Prime Minister Diem announcing our willingness to supply aid directly to Viet-Nam and to undertake direct military training of the Vietnamese National Army. I am enclosing as Tab A a suggested letter to the Vietnamese Prime Minister which I propose be published on delivery.[2]

Since the Government of Cambodia is keenly desirous of direct United States aid in a military training mission, in the supply of arms and equipment, and in economic and financial assistance, and will undoubtedly wonder if United States policy toward Cambodia will approximate that publicly announced toward Free Viet-Nam, it is recommended that you sign the letter under Tab B which will be given to the King of Cambodia and made public after delivery.[3]

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[1] A handwritten notation on the source text indicates that the President approved the letter to the King of Cambodia on Sept. 24 and the letter to the Prime Minister of Vietnam on Sept. 28.

[2] Tab A is identical with the letter actually delivered to Prime Minister Diem on Oct. 23; for text, see p. 2166.

Because of the special status of Laos following the cease fire agreement and the present absence of the King from that country, it is not believed necessary at this time to address a similar message to the King of Laos.

If you approve these two messages, I will make a further determination here, after consulting the French, as to the best time to send them.[4]

WALTER B. SMITH

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[3] Tab B is identical with the letter actually delivered to King Norodom Sihanouk on Oct. 2; for text, see editorial note, p. 2114.

[4] The following typewritten notation appears at the bottom of the source text: "Handwritten note: We are starting talks with the French on the 27th and I hope to smoke them out."

751G.13/9–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 24, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 9:14 a. m.]

1213. Repeated information Paris 424. Shortly before 1 o'clock Dr. Fishel appeared at Embassy with instructions to report following: General Xuan had just been to see Diem to state he could not remain as Minister of Defense. Reason for his action, according to Xuan, was Hinh had received direct telegram from Bao Dai stating Bao Dai agreed with Hinh and was solving conflict by appointing Xuan to form new government. Xuan said accordingly Hinh was holding press conference at 1 p. m. today at which this news would be made public. Xuan said Hinh told him army and Binh Xuyen were going to organize "popular demonstrations" tomorrow against Diem government and specifically against Cao Dai and Hoa Hao if latter persisted in participating in Diem government.

Xuan reached into side pocket and brandished paper which he said was copy of Bao Dai telegram. He did not show telegram to Diem and latter did not have wit enough to snatch it out of his hand.

At this dramatic moment Diem had to leave for port for ceremony celebrating arrival of 100,000 refugees borne by US Navy from north. Ceremony scheduled 1 p. m. was delayed 45 minutes. During much this time Diem talked to me in by no means low voice of his troubles and perplexities. I replied I thought he should be calm and go ahead with his ceremony scheduled for four this afternoon to announce new government as if nothing had happened. He obviously could not cancel announcing his new government on basis of unshown telegram from an interested party and I hoped Cao Dai and Hoa Hao would not back off on any such unsubstantiated news. President said, however, Xuan informed him of intention of letting two sects know of "Bao Dai's decision".

Hinh did not hold press conference at 1 p. m. as Xuan had said. Instead Xuan appeared alone and read press statement announcing his own resignation, repudiating Diem, and saying time had come for his dismissal. No mention was made of any telegram from Bao Dai nor any mandate to Xuan to form new government. (Text statement contained Embtel 1214, repeated Paris 425.)[1] Xuan refused to answer any questions addressed by correspondents other than to state he was "the servitor of the people" and departed quickly.

At this writing Diem has just finished his own press conference announcing his new government including participation Hoa Hao and Cao Dai. No Minister Defense has been appointed but Col. Minh has been made Deputy Minister.

It is possible telegram from Bao Dai alleged by General Xuan is pure fiction of imagination and act to prevent Diem from forming new government with sects. On other hand, it is possible Bao Dai, due to our failure to reach him as recommended by this Embassy, has sent some such word to Hinh. Such uncertainty as this and perhaps attempts at bluff using Bao Dai's name can be expected to continue in this unsettled situation if we do not have first hand knowledge by personal contact of Bao Dai's intentions and if he does not have first hand knowledge of US position.

HEATH

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[1] Telegram 1214 from Saigon, Sept. 24, is not printed. (751G.00/9–2454)

751G.00/9–2454 : Telegram

Senator Mike Mansfield to the Secretary of State

SECRET NIACT BERLIN, September 24, 1954—4 p. m.
[Received 12:51 p. m.]

212. Repeated information priority Paris 28, priority London 23. For Secretary Dulles from Senator Mansfield. Re Deptel 1046 to Paris, Sept 22, rptd Berlin as Paris tel 12.[1] As requested in reftel, which was paraphrased to me here Sept 23, following is my reply.

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[1] The reference telegram, not printed, requested an evaluation of the Vietnam situation by Senator Mansfield who was in Europe, having recently completed his study mission in Indochina. (033.1100 MA/9–2254)

The political crisis in south Vietnam arises from the insistence of Diem on forming a government that is free of corruption and dedicated to achieving genuine national independence and internal amelioration. He is opposed by various Vietnamese political, military, and Demi-Monde groups and probably to a lesser extent by the quasi-religious sects.

Diem is inexperienced and finds it difficult to compromise. These personal shortcomings exacerbate the crisis but I do not believe they are at the root of it. It is doubtful, in my opinion that any compromise he would be willing to make short of the virtual abandonment of his objectives—that is, national independence, an end to corruption, and internal amelioration would satisfy his opponents. They fear an immediate loss of power and revenue, perhaps even more than the ultimate threat of the Viet Minh.

Ironically, however, only a govt of the kind Diem envisions—and it would be a govt worthy of our support—has much chance of survival, eventually free of outside support because only such a govt can hope to achieve a degree of popular support as against the Viet Minh. If Diem fails, the alternative is a govt composed of his present opponents, no combination of which is likely to base itself strongly in the populace. Such a govt would be indefinitely dependent on support of the French and could survive only so long as the latter are able to obtain Viet Minh acquiescence in its survival.

Most of those who oppose Diem have a long history of initimate working relations with the French in Indochina and have been amenable to the latter's guidance in the past. The fundamental question, therefore, may well be not can Diem form a worthy govt but do the French really want Diem and what he stands for to succeed? Even if Paris were so inclined, the French Govt would have to be willing to deal firmly with its large political and military bureaucracy in Indochina. Otherwise, Diem's prospects of achieving success could be constantly undercut by their activities and machinations in Saigon, regardless of official French policy.

[MANSFIELD]

751G.13/9–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, September 24, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 4:11 p. m.]

1267. Repeated information priority Saigon 151. During course of call on Roux at Quai d'Orsay today McClintock[1] was requested by him to see DeJean, but had not previously been briefed of contents Deptel 1063 or Paris tels 1233 and 1256.[2]

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[1] Ambassador McClintock was in Paris en route to Cambodia where he presented his credentials on Oct. 2.

DeJean said that Bao Dai had told him that Le Van Vien had discussed with Bao Dai a change of government in Saigon and had produced a list of potential ministers for such a new cabinet. According to DeJean Bao Dai had given Le Van Vien commission to canvass situation in Vietnam and to recommend a new government to the Chief of State. Whether or not Le Van Vien himself would be Prime Minister was an open question. According to DeJean's information from Bao Dai latter has definitely decided to sack Diem.

We saw DeJean this afternoon and, pursuant to first paragraph Deptel 1074,[3] urged that when he saw Bao Dai he indicate necessity of retaining Diem as long as possible and through period of Washington talks.

When questioned as to Bao Dai's travel plans DeJean said that he had informed him that he planned to return to Saigon in approximately one month's time. However, Bao Dai did not exclude possibility that, if situation should continue to deteriorate, he might have to leave forthwith for his country. McClintock expressed skepticism.

As Department will appreciate, it is an invidious exercise to approach Bao Dai either directly or through French.

DeJean told McClintock this morning that there is a powerful faction in French Government which is urging Mendes-France to forget Bao Dai and the present so-called free Vietnamese and to place their bets on Ho Chi Minh. He said this explained present press campaign against Bao Dai and referred particularly to *Le Monde*. DeJean feared very much that with continuing disintegration of political scene in Saigon counsels of this nature would grow in strength, and although he averred Mendes-France was "firm" in his resistance to this advocacy, he plainly intimated that if situation in South Vietnam continues to disintegrate French Government might feel tempted to go along with Viet Minh.[4]

DILLON

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[2] For telegram 1063 to Paris, Sept. 23, see p. 2052. Regarding telegrams 1233 (Sept. 23), and 1256 (Sept. 24) from Paris, see footnote 5, p. 2053.

[3] See footnote 5, *ibid.*

[4] Ambassador Dillon transmitted the following additional information in telegram 1285 from Paris (156 to Saigon), Sept. 26: "I obtained confirmation today . . . that an influential group close to Mendes is working in favor of a drastic switch in Indochina policy aimed at abandonment of Nationalist elements in South Vietnam and close cooperation with Ho Chi Minh.

"Maurice Schumann told me that Roux had just told him of existence of this plot which was causing Roux concern. No steps have been taken and there is as yet no indication that Mendes will accept such advice, but group favoring this policy continues to press for its adoption." (751G.00/9–2654)

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 215th Meeting of the National Security Council, Friday, September 24, 1954[1]

[Extract]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Present at the 215th meeting of the Council were the Vice President of the United States, presiding; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Attorney General (for Item 3); the Acting Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Acting Secretary of the Army; the Secretary of the Navy; the Secretary of the Air Force; Robert R. Bowie, Department of State; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Rose; Assistant Secretary of Defense Hensel; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; the Chief of Naval Operations; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force; the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

1. *Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security*

The Director of Central Intelligence reported that the situation in South Vietnam had reached the crisis stage in the struggle for power between Hinh and Prime Minister Diem. Though they had formally indicated neutrality, the French appeared to be backing Hinh. If he failed to secure control over the army, it was difficult to see how Diem could last. Bao Dai has suggested to Diem that he resign, but the latter has not seen fit to act on this suggestion. Bao Dai was in a position to exercise considerable power if he chose to, but he was, of course, under heavy French influence. The next few days will show whether Diem can stand up to Hinh. From the point of view of policy, concluded Mr. Dulles, the problem was whether the United States and France can get together and back a good Vietnamese leader.

At the conclusion of these remarks, Admiral Radford inquired whether the French could not call Hinh off. Mr. Dulles replied that undoubtedly they could, but that Hinh probably had the secret backing of the French.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on Sept. 27.

Mr. Cutler, after reading the conclusions of the latest National Intelligence Estimate on South Vietnam,[2] inquired whether the Secretary of State had any comments to make on the grave situation indicated in this Estimate. Was it true, Mr. Cutler inquired, that the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Heath, was being replaced?

Secretary Dulles said that there were plans to make a change in Saigon, though in the last few weeks Ambassador Heath had been doing a very good job. Until this time the Secretary had felt that Heath had been too long in this position and was too close to the French. However, he is now standing up to them, and the deterioration in South Vietnam is not ascribable to any weakness of Heath's.

The heart of the problem in South Vietnam, said Secretary Dulles, is that we really don't yet know Mendes-France's game. Is he actually collaborating in some fashion with the Vietminh, as some intelligence reports suggest? Or is he so busy with other matters in France that he has permitted the direction of policy in Indochina to get back into the old colonialist channels? We cannot tell the answer to these questions yet, but we may know more after the Nine-Power meeting in London.[3]

Mr. Allen Dulles repeated his earlier view that the best course of action to arrest the deterioration in South Vietnam was for the French and the Americans to unite firmly in support of one local leader.

Secretary Wilson said that he thought that an even more desirable course of action was for the United States to get completely out of the area. The chances of saving any part of Southeast Asia were, in his opinion, nothing.

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[2] Presumably a reference to SNIE 63-6-54, Sept. 15, p. 2028.

[3] For documentation, see volume v.

751G.00/9-2554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 25, 1954—9 p. m.

1232. Repeated information Paris 431. I saw Diem at noon today and told him that if he had decided to make peace with Hinh as we were told he had, I would be glad, if he thought such action useful, to send General O'Daniel to talk first with Hinh. If Hinh were already decided [not?] to make peace, O'Daniel would present arguments as to the unwisdom of such a course. I said I had heard that Diem would agree to rescind his orders for Hinh to leave for France if latter would issue a public statement saying that since both Diem and Hinh had the same aim of extirpating Communist infiltration, that he, Hinh, no longer had any quarrel with the government with which he would henceforth cooperate. I suggested Hinh should be asked to produce a plan for the army in connection with civil police and officials and Ministry of Information to break up Viet Minh control of villages which they have heretofore held in the south and center.

Diem said he would have to think over any reconciliation with Hinh. If he did make peace with Hinh after the latter's outrageous behavior, he, Diem, would lose all his followers who would accuse him of being without honor or courage. I suggested that on the contrary they might consider that he had acted with political wisdom. To be brutally frank, at present he was without power to dismiss Hinh or even make him obey his orders to go to France. Hinh now had an excuse for not obeying such order in Bao Dai's telegram saying that latter was giving study to the army-government conflict and would let Hinh know later of his decision. Hinh would reply that pending Bao Dai's further instructions he could not leave the army and the country. Hinh's following in the army might be weak as Diem asserted but for the moment the army was obeying Hinh. Not a single officer of rank had been willing to replace Hinh as chief of staff. By "burying the hatchet" Diem would have time to weaken the rebellious camarilla which supported Hinh within the army.

Diem then said that the Hinh matter could easily be settled if the French would simply order him back to France since Hinh was a French officer. I said that was the one thing French Army would not do under present circumstances. Hinh would wave Bao Dai's telegram to show the latter wished him to stay on for time being. Of course if Hinh engaged in active rebellion then the French might intervene but Hinh was too smart for that. I remarked that if President decided to call Hinh in and attempt reconciliation two things might happen: Hinh would either make peace with him or he would refuse. If the first happened President would gain time to establish order and obedience in army. If Hinh refused to make peace, then Hinh would be in an impossible position in which he would be supported neither by Bao Dai, the French nor by US. Up to now Hinh had very cleverly maneuvered so that majority of army thought he was defending them against unwarranted civil encroachment. If Hinh refused honorable terms of peace he would appear in true light of a military grabber of power.

I said the foregoing advice had been proferred on the misinformation (furnished by Fishel) that Diem had already arrived at same conclusion as myself that it was necessary to end the conflict with Hinh peacefully. I greatly feared if it kept on that Bao Dai might listen to those advisers counseling replacement of Diem by Xuan or some other leader. Diem told me Xuan had returned this morning offering to withdraw his resignation as Defense Minister. I told him I would express no opinion as to whether Xuan should be allowed to return to the Cabinet or not.

I did not inform Diem that Ham, delegate of the Imperial Cabinet in Saigon, had told me that he believed that Bao Dai would shortly appoint Xuan to replace Diem although Diem had admitted to me that he had received no telegram from Bao Dai to that effect.

Fishel tells me since my conversation, Diem was approached by Cao Dai General Phuong and Colonel Thai who suggested that if Diem would take Bay Vien into Cabinet as honorary Minister of State in Defense Ministry (similar to positions held by Generals Phuong and Soai) and also give to Binh Xuyen Social Action Ministry, Bay Vien would "persuade" Hinh to leave for France for three or four weeks. Cao Dai, who presently hold Social Action Ministry, are willing relinquish it to Binh Xuyen under this arrangement.

I told Fishel that I doubted Bay Vien could persuade Hinh to leave. However, I thought Diem should try to make peace with both Hinh and Bay Vien particularly if the latter as the price for his admission into the Cabinet would agree to give up his gambling concession. This would receive widespread approval and be evidence of accomplishment by Diem. Vien had previously informed Diem he would be willing to close down concession immediately if government would contribute to the support of his private army of possibly 2,000 men.

HEATH

751G.00/9-2554

Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] September 25, 1954.

Subject: Forthcoming Talks with the French on Indochina[2]

I. *French Intentions*

a) According to the French Embassy, the French Government will undertake in these talks to (1) give us an estimate of the situation in Indochina and their general policy lines towards the three states, (2) coordinate French and US policies along definite lines towards the three Associated States and the Viet Minh, and (3) reach an understanding on as many details as possible regarding military matters, particularly in Viet-Nam and Laos. The French stress the need for common action with the US in establishing a new track following Geneva.

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[1] Drafted by Kenneth T. Young, Acting Director of PSA.

[2] In Press Release No. 529 of Sept. 25, the Department of State announced that Guy La Chambre, Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States, and General Paul Ely, French Commissioner General in Indochina, would be in Washington for discussions on Indochina, Sept. 27–29. It was noted that Edgar Faure, French Finance Minister who was in Washington on other international financial matters, would also participate. The announcement further stated that the talks would be informal and exploratory in nature, and that the governments of the Associated States were being kept informed. For the text of Press Release No. 529, see Department of State *Bulletin*, Oct. 4, 1954, pp. 491–492. A memorandum of a briefing on the talks provided to the Ambassadors of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia by Assistant Secretary Robertson on Sept. 24 is in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361.

II. *Arrangements for the Talks*

a) The US and French sides have agreed to a tentative schedule of four meetings: a small restricted meeting Monday afternoon[3] to discuss basic political policies, military talks Tuesday morning, economic talks afternoon, and a final session Wednesday morning. LaChambre and Ely are seeing General Smith today at 11:30 at their request for a preliminary private talk.[4]

b) Depending on the French positions, the US should reserve its position of any final decisions or commitments regarding new military and economic support programs during these talks. Congressional committees will have to be consulted in any event, also the three Associated States. The primary purpose of these talks should be to establish parallel policies toward the three states and towards the Viet Minh if possible. Some decisions may have to be taken of a limited nature, if desirable, in order not to leave a vacuum.

c) We must keep in mind the concern of the three Associated States over bilateral talks. We have kept them advised here and in the field. I saw the three representatives yesterday together to assure them no decisions would be taken privately respecting their countries and to confirm that we would keep them informed during the talks. The French have proposed a meeting Monday morning with us and the three Associated States to discuss the Protocol to the Manila Pact and Southeast Asia as a way to avoid injuring their feelings. I feel my meeting with them and by keeping them informed next week will serve the same purpose better. Or we might meet with them together with the French at the end of the talks.

d) We will send you a briefing telegram immediately after each of the meetings here so that you will be fully informed during the London talks.[5]

III. *US Policies on the three Associated States*

a) Our objective is to gain the greatest possible French acceptance and active support for a vigorous policy to create and strengthen free Viet-Nam between now and mid-1956 when elections in Viet-Nam might be held, and to support Cambodia and Laos. We hope the

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[3] Sept. 27.

[4] See telegram 1217 to Saigon, Sept. 25, p. 2070.

[5] Secretary Dulles attended the London Nine-Power Conference, Sept. 28–Oct. 3. For documentation, see volume v.

French will go along with our decisions on direct aid for supporting Viet-Nam and Cambodia and for resisting Communist Viet Minh.

b) The principal problem at the moment in Viet-Nam continues to be the development of a stable, representative government. There has been an encouraging trend during the last few days, two of the sects deciding to join the Diem government. If that government is still in office when the talks begin, we should emphasize that the facts of the matter are the Diem government, however imperfect, is the best in sight, it merits the support of the US and France now so that we all can get on with the job of creating a strong free Viet-Nam. If such a Diem government proves incompetent after a fair trial, then we can re-examine the situation since we are not wedded to Diem as a person or to the Diem Government as such. If it appears that the Diem government is being forced out in favor of such a candidate as the head of the Binh Xuyen (a gangster type faction) we would have to make clear to the French the very grave difficulty this would cause the Executive and the Congress in providing aid to such a government.

c) We should reaffirm the position taken in your letter to Mendes-France of August 18th[6] regarding direct budgetary aid to Viet-Nam and our intention immediately to transmit a letter to that effect to the Chief of the Vietnamese Government.

d) There are a number of concrete problems which we may wish to discuss with the French to get their views, i.e., continuation of Bao Dai as Chief of State, the amendment of present juridical relationships between France and free Viet-Nam and the measures for transfer of real independent sovereign powers.

e) Regarding Cambodia, we should reaffirm our intention to furnish direct military aid and training to Cambodia, at its request, together with some economic assistance. We must also yet make our position on this clear to the British. We will proceed with the letter to the King of Cambodia and the negotiation of a bilateral agreement regarding military aid and training. (The JCS have interposed a condition that all French personnel should be withdrawn prior to our undertaking aid and training.)

f) As for Laos, we will work jointly with the French on military assistance and independently on direct budgetary support and economic rehabilitation.

g) If the French consent to the US position in principle, we could propose that French and US assistance—military, economic and technical—to the three Associated States be carried out through informal trilateral coordination in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane under the chairmanship of the local governments. Our aid will, of course, be identified as separate from the French.

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[6] See telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, p. 1957.

IV. *Military Views of the JCS Regarding Indochina*

a) *Viet-Nam*—The JCS on September 22 recommended in substance (not cleared by Defense as yet):[7]

(1) Due to present unstable political situation, against the assignment of a training mission to MAAG/Saigon, and against indicating at this time US intentions regarding support and training of Vietnamese forces.

(2) Force levels for Viet-Nam consisting of 234,000 Vietnamese ground forces; retention of a minimum of four French divisions until phased out by trained Vietnamese units; and a small navy and air force, together with French units. This will require extensive detailed training over a period of three to five years (presumably by the French, although their memorandum is ambiguous on the latter point) assuming initial cost of equipment as zero and received from French sources, annual cost of these forces is estimated tentatively at $443,400,000.

(3) Prior to assumption of any support of the forces of free Viet-Nam, a definite agreement should be obtained from the French Government regarding the timing of their programmed phased withdrawal (this seems to contradict (1) above).

(4) US military support to that area [presumably Viet-Nam][8] including the training, equipping of forces should be accomplished at a low priority.

(*Comment on JCS views:* Their reserved, negative position may help us tactically in the talks with the French, but, if unchanged, will hinder implementaton of NSC objectives in Viet-Nam, and thereby ultimately endanger Cambodian [*Vietnamese?*] independence.)

b) *Cambodia*—The JCS

(1) Offer no objection to a MAAG in Cambodia.

(2) Recommend the bilateral agreement between US and Cambodia provide that all French advisers ultimately be withdrawn in order that the US may deal directly with Cambodia.

(3) Recommend a Cambodian army of 53,600 consisting of three divisions of light infantry. Assuming initial cost of equipment as zero, the annual operating cost to train and maintain the above force would be approximately $94 million.

V. *Economic Aid*

a) There is a difference of opinion between FOA and State. Governor Stassen has recommended a cessation of all budgetary support payments to France. General Smith expressed the Department's position on this in a letter dated September 21.[9] This is a matter which should be ironed out before economic talks begin with the French on Tuesday afternoon. The Department has proposed, regarding US aid from fiscal year 1954 funds, that we tell the French that pending a final US decision regarding fiscal year 1954 aid, we will continue the current arrangements of budget support for the French Expeditionary Corps during calendar year 1954 except that we propose to suspend reimbursements, retroactive to July 21, for equipment which has not been or will not be delivered to Indochina.

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[7] See letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State, Sept. 28, and its enclosures, p. 2088.

[8] Brackets in the source text.

[9] For the text of the letter of Sept. 21 from Acting Secretary Smith to FOA Director Stassen and other documentation on overall aid to France, see volume VI.

b) With respect to US aid from fiscal year 1955 funds, we have recommended the following positions:

(1) Propose that the support for French forces retained in Indochina in calendar year 1955 be financed by France from its own resources. If the French object and insist they cannot keep the planned level of forces in Indochina without some continued US support, we may have to take a different position; in this case we should advise the French that no final US decision on this point can be taken at this time, since we must assess the results of the present talks, current developments in Indochina and many other factors.

(2) We will undertake direct programs of budgetary support for Viet-Nam and Cambodia, and Laos if necessary. We should ask the French for their views on the likely outcome of the current negotiations in Paris regarding future financial arrangements between France and the Associated States.

VI. *Meeting with Defense and FOA at 10:30*[10]

a) The purpose of today's meetings with you is primarily to lay the above political policies before you for approval, and to inform you of the JCS and FOA positions. Admiral Carney for Defense and Governor Stassen will be in 5100 at 10:30 to hear the political briefings in preparation for Monday's meeting on basic policies with the French.

b) This 10:30 meeting is a good chance for you to state the general political approach you favor, and to deal with Stassen's wish to suspend fiscal year 1954 aid to France. It is hoped you can support the economic position in paragraph V, which reflects General Smith's letter to Stassen, and give the broad political reasons against suspension.

c) The following agenda for the 10:30 talks is recommended:

1. Political Policies (this memo, D–1/1 and D–1/2.)[11]
2. Aid Programs (D–3/3 and D–3/4)[11]
3. Military Aspects (JCS views of 22 September 1954)

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[10] For the record of the meeting, see *infra*.

[11] None of the background papers prepared for the talks with La Chambre and Ely is printed. This documentation may be found in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361

Summary Minute of a Meeting at the Department of State, September 25, 1954, 10:30 a. m.[1]

SECRET

PARTICIPANTS

State Department	*Defense*	*FOA*
Secretary Dulles	Admiral Carney	Governor Stassen
Under Secretary Smith	Admiral Smedburg[4]	Mr. FitzGerald[6]
Mr. Hoover[2]	Mr. Sullivan[5]	
Mr. MacArthur		
Mr. Robertson—FE		
Mr. Barbour[3]—EUR		
Mr. Young—PSA		
Mr. Stelle—S/P		
Mr. Beigel—WE		
Mr. Moreland—S/MSA		
Mr. Hoey—PSA		
Mr. Selby—S/S		
Mr. Purnell—PSA		

1. *Political Aspects of the Talks*

Secretary Dulles outlined the political aspects as follows:

(*a*) The chief problem is to reach agreement with the French concerning Indochina. We have supported Diem who is not perfect but is at least a strong nationalist and largely due to U.S. influence, has recently broadened his Cabinet to include the sects. (*b*) The French have not been backing Diem and some colonial interests seem to think they could do business with Ho and that it would not be too bad if the Diem Government fell and the Communists took over. If such policy should prevail there is no reason for us to give further support to the French in Indochina.

(*c*) The first objective then is to seek agreement with the French on a political program, failing which there is no point in our discussing further aid. If agreement on a political program is reached we should be able to reduce the magnitude of our aid but it is doubtful that we can cut it out entirely. Among the points to be considered would be military costs involved in keeping the French expeditionary forces in Viet-Nam or elsewhere.

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[1] Drafted by Lewis M. Purnell of PSA. Circulated as document ELaC Memo 15, Oct. 4.

[2] Consultant to the Secretary of State; Under Secretary of State from Oct. 4, 1954.

[3] Walworth Barbour, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

[4] Rear Adm. William R. Smedberg, Director, Politico-Military Policy Division in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy).

[5] Charles A. Sullivan, Director, Policy Division, Office of Foreign Military Affairs, Department of Defense.

[6] Dennis A. FitzGerald, Deputy Director for Operations, Foreign Operations Administration.

(*d*) There seems to be general agreement and a desire on the part of Congress that we grant support direct to the Associated States.

Secretary Dulles then used some notes he had taken of conversations with Chancellor Adenauer last week[7] in which the Chancellor had suggested that we not cut off all aid to France but that we regulate the flow according to the behavior of the government. The Chancellor thought Mendes-France was not a Communist tool but could be led to play the Communist game. He thought that if aid were cut off too quickly, Mendes-France might feel forced to work with the Communists. Secretary Dulles noted that he was inclined to agree with Adenauer's analysis.

Secretary Dulles said MDAP would come to a complete stop as far as supporting the French in Indochina but some funds might be reserved for Viet-Nam. Under Secretary Smith noted that if the French leave military equipment behind in Indochina we may be under obligation to re-equip French forces deployed in Metropolitan France.

2. *Economic Aspects*

Mr. Stassen then outlined some basic financial facts in the situation, citing our total aid expenditures to France for the first six months of this year as $427 million which he then broke down. He noted that this was the largest flow of dollar aid to any country in the world. Mr. Stassen asked that he be informed as to the rate of dollar flow to France desired and asked that no definitive commitments be made with France as the problem needs continuing study and consultations with Congress. He suggested that we be pleasant but leave ourselves in a position to loosen or tighten our controls at a later date.

Secretary Dulles asked how the flow could be cut if desired. Mr. Stassen replied that the flow could be immediately controlled through payment or reimbursement on our advancements in connection with equipment being manufactured in France for the Indochina theatre. To Under Secretary Smith's question concerning French payments promised for the Indochina war, Mr. Stassen replied that the French were up on their payments involving the expeditionary forces but way below on their expenditures in support of a Vietnamese military establishment. Mr. Stassen noted that the French have received from the U.S. about $200 million out of the $385 million this year. One portion of this is a $70 million advance payment. He also noted that the French have disbursed much of this money in French francs.

Mr. Stassen and Mr. Dulles commented on the importance of the financial picture in France and noted that the main effect of any typing up of aid would be psychological, that is, it would discourage capital which might begin to pull out of France and the franc would probably begin to fall. It was noted that the Bank of France, however, is in a good position at this time.

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[7] For documentation on Secretary Dulles' trip to Bonn and London, Sept. 16–17, see volume v.

3. *Military Aspects*

Admiral Carney stated that it would be difficult to consider training and support of indigenous forces in Indochina unless some political stability obtained. He also emphasized that the U.S. equipment in Indochina should be returned to U.S. control.

Secretary Dulles then inquired about the military equipment in the North, to which Admiral Carney noted that it appeared the French schedule will be met. However, he said we should seek the cooperation of the French in assisting American shipping in both Haiphong and Saigon. He said 225,000 tons were in depots and that 225,000 tons were in organic equipment. He said the Navy is keeping its shipping in excess there but that he thought it was necessary to have a reserve in the event additional space were needed quickly. Under Secretary Smith commented that the picture concerning evacuation of equipment from the North was much better than had been expected. Admiral Carney said that the United States would like to regain control of the equipment in the hands of the expeditionary force for redistribution elsewhere.

Under Secretary Smith said that he would like to see the French keep four divisions in Indochina and reassign some of the equipment there to the Cambodian and Vietnamese military establishments.

Admiral Carney said the equipment can't be removed legally by the French and the ultimate use of this equipment will have to be determined later, depending upon the outcome of political agreement with the French. He said the situation was a touchy one and we would like to remove as much equipment as possible without precipitating the French.

4. *Recapitulation Political Economic Defense Aspects*

Secretary Dulles said the key to the situation is whether political agreement can be reached concerning Viet-Nam and whether agreement can be reached in London and until we know the answers to these two questions we cannot come to final decisions. He said he would not want to commit the United States until we see what kind of government we are going to have to work with.

Admiral Carney observed that there was no use of training troops in Viet-Nam until we know what we are going to get but noted that we could reach a decision to go ahead in Cambodia.

Secretary Dulles and Under Secretary Smith agreed we could go ahead with Cambodia.

Mr. Stassen commented that the FOA people were in agreement that Diem was honest, courageous, but lacking administrative experience and that Michigan State was sending four people of its best to help him at his request. Mr. Stassen noted that if we channeled aid directly through Diem it will give him prestige not only with the Vietnamese but also assist him in his dealings with the French.

Secretary Dulles asked if the Vietnamese wanted dollars, to which Mr. Stassen replied in the affirmative saying they need dollars for imports and general budget support. He also commented that dollar aid through Paris would be disadvantageous.

Under Secretary Smith observed that one of the problems would be that the French would try to control dollar aid to the Associated States.

Mr. Stassen then noted that the Communists often play along with commercial interests until they gain complete control and that this is exactly what is happening now in North Viet-Nam.

Secretary Dulles cited Senator Mansfield's appraisal of the situation in Indochina which is in support of our analysis and noted that the Senator's views would carry a lot of weight in the Foreign Relations Committee, especially with the Democrats.

Mr. Stassen again asked for an estimate of how much cut-off aid was desired and when.

Mr. Hoover asked about the rate of build-up of French balances.

Mr. Stassen and Mr. FitzGerald stated that there had been a steady build-up in the French balances for the past six months. Under Secretary Smith said the flow of aid to France should be diminished. Secretary Dulles said we would like to see the reserves of the Bank of France come down. In this connection he said he did not know how much of a cut in aid would be required to achieve this result.

Mr. Hoover noted that this course of action would really hurt the French. Secretary Dulles stated that the dollars and gold reserves should go down and he would like to see capital start moving out of France. Mr. Hoover asked if this could be done by taking stock here rather than by abrupt cut-offs. Mr. Stassen said it could.

Mr. Robertson asked about the aid to France committed prior to July 21.

Mr. Stassen replied that much of this was in advance payments to which we have offsets coming back. Mr. Stassen then outlined the magnitude of the aid to France, noting that there was a total of $2½ billion total assistance, the largest single part being military end items. Mr. Stassen also urged that we withhold payments on the basis of the need to study the problem in consultation with Congress.

Admiral Carney said that there was no point in going into detail concerning Defense training until some agreement had been reached at a political level with France.

Under Secretary Smith said that in our dealing with the French in these talks we should not be unfriendly but that we should make no commitments; that we should be a little cool but not too cool and indicate to the French that we would talk with them again in the near future on concrete details.

751G.13/9–2554 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, September 25, 1954—5 : 58 p. m.
PRIORITY

1217. London for info Secretary.[2] Limit distribution. Saturday morning[3] La Chambre met at his request with General Smith for small private meeting with immediate staffs both sides. Frank, informal preliminary exchange of views took place on nature political problems requiring solutions Vietnam. No decisions. No discussion Cambodia or Laos.

In opening remarks General Smith welcomed La Chambre and his aides and holding of talks at this time. Smith then stressed (*a*) importance frank talks to reach agreement on political program Vietnam as prerequisite for assurances to U.S. military and congressional sources on future programs, (*b*) need for decisions on kind of Vietnamese Government both countries would support and in which event such government could survive and act, (*c*) U.S. views on Diem Government as best in sight though it needs help and requires more efficiency plus loyalty Vietnamese Army, and (*d*) difficulties in continuing intrigues and actions of Bao Dai since any change government Saigon would immensely complicate our problems. Re Diem, Smith read Mansfield telegram[4] (repeated separate message to Saigon) emphasizing his views would have great influence in Congress, particularly with Democrats. Smith also referred to Communist exploitation present confusion in order subvert free Vietnam.

Responding in general agreement, La Chambre stressed (*a*) only French objective is complete unity of action with U.S. in North Vietnam and South Vietnam, (*b*) French agree and accept Diem honest, incorruptible, strongly nationalistic and also somewhat anti-French which they do not mind but they are particularly concerned he has not produced efficient government which can eliminate corruption and effectively meet Communist infiltration, (*c*) since Geneva and Mendes-France guarantee of independence, French have transferred powers, (*d*) principal French worry Viet-Minh profiting by delays and making great headway with intimidation campaign South Vietnam in violation armistice, (*e*) must take counteraction and only Sects have actual capabilities counter Viet-Minh, (*f*) while Diem Government now has two Sects critical problem remains with Binh Xuyen and Hinh outside which risks further conflict since Bao Dai can unmake governments unless he agrees with us, and (*g*) French have been reluctant use FEC restore order and thus desire Bao Dai assent for cloak of legality. Mendes-France not desperate over situation and believes it can be resolved with US–French unity of action. Sainteny reported after visit Hanoi, Viet-Minh and Ho Chi Minh 100% Communist. La Chambre said no doubts that score.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Also sent priority to Paris as 1113, to Vientiane as 44, to Phnom Penh as 62, and to London as 1749.

[2] Secretary Dulles was in London for the Nine-Power Conference.

[3] A memorandum of the Smith–La Chambre conversation of Saturday morning, Sept. 25, is in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361.

[4] Reference is to telegram 212 from Berlin, Sept. 24, p. 2055.

Re future Bao Dai, La Chambre said it would be unfortunate in elections 1956 for Vietnam people have choose between him and Ho Chi Minh. We must decide what to do with Bao Dai, perhaps through some change in delegation of his powers so that he would be permanently out. As for consultative assembly there might be something in it but should be carefully examined to ensure Communists would not profit. Smith agreed in general re Bao Dai.

In conclusion Smith stressed need for positive political program to save what had been salvaged at Geneva.

Agreed meet with representatives Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos next week after bilateral talks.

SMITH

751G.00/9–2554 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, September 26, 1954—1:21 a. m.

1115. Tonight Millet of French Embassy and Cheysson informed Dept French forces in order prevent clashes and bloodshed intervened in Saigon area between Cao Dai troops moving towards city and Binh Xuyen. French seriously concerned and desire joint US-French position. As solution they want Bao Dai instruct Hinh and Binh Xuyen immediately cooperate Diem Govt, prevent disorders, relieve French nasty chore, and unite for urgent tasks build strong Viet Nam and vigorously counter Viet Minh. LaChambre will telephone above solution to Paris if we concur.

Although we have received no other info this situation, we inclined agree such action, since it seems safe assume it would be along lines recent Dept instructions on Diem and Bao Dai and with indications Saigon 1232 repeated info Paris 431.[2] However Dept would most certainly not want our assent be construed to permit nor to result in Bao Dai firing Diem. Essential US views accurately understood by French and Bao Dai.

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[1] **Drafted by Young of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as niact telegram 1218.**

LaChambre informed substance this telegram.

Comments requested.[3]

SMITH

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[2] Dated Sept. 25, p. 2059.

[3] In telegram 1238 from Saigon, Sept. 26, Ambassador Heath reported that the French had turned back Cao Dai troops seeking to join the palace guard. In view of the danger of troop movements and clashes, he endorsed the proposal that the French request Bao Dai to instruct Hinh and the Binh Xuyen to cooperate with Diem. (751G.00/9–2654) Ambassador Dillon, in telegram 1287 from Paris, Sept. 26, also endorsed the proposal, stating: "If French prepared take position indicated reference telegram [1115], we see no reason delay our agreement since it would appear French have now accepted fully our view of situation." (751G.00/9–2654) In telegram 1308 of the following day, Dillon reported that Dejean had delivered the agreed message to Bao Dai at Cannes. Bao Dai had not appeared pleased. (751G.00/9–2754)

FE/VN files, lot 58 D 257, "MAAG—Post-Geneva"

The Embassy of Vietnam to the Department of State [1]

WASHINGTON, September 26, 1954.

A strong foreign occupying army can protect a country, but it can also dominate, paralyze its government and even favor a "*coup d'état*" by its opponents.

That is precisely what the French authorities are doing just now: instead of helping the legal government to enforce law and order, they encouraged General Hinh's rebellion by ordering Premier Ngo Dinh Diem to take Hinh's own father as Minister of Interior, they allow Hinh to have his own way in Saigon, and, at the same time, they prevent the legal government from having in its own capital the protection of its own faithful troops.

Under such circumstances and when the Binh Xuyen police did not hesitate to open fire on unarmed refugees demonstrating in favor of Premier Ngo Dinh Diem, it is quite easy to prove that Premier Diem has no followers and is inefficient! Under such circumstances, what Vietnamese, unarmed as they are, could be bold enough to declare themselves for the legal government.

It must be stressed that General Hinh is still registered as a Lieutenant-Colonel under the number 121 in the French Air Force list. Even as Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Army, he is still under the French High Command and, therefore, it would have been easy for the French not to allow him to use armed cars to defy the government.

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[1] The source text bears a handwritten notation by Assistant Secretary Robertson stating that he received this communication from the Vietnamese Ambassador on Sept. 27.

Therefore, the American Government should refuse to help the French to maintain their Expeditionary Corps in Viet Nam unless and until they repair the harm they have done in giving openly their support to a rebellious general against the legal government.

This serious incident proves that by giving arms and money to help the French to have a strong occupying army in Viet Nam, the American Government gives them the power to dominate the Vietnamese political situation irresistibly. It must be recalled that such a power directly benefits the Viet Minh when used, as it is now and has always been, to favor Vietnamese politicians who enjoy too much French confidence and, therefore, are subject to too much Vietnamese distrust.

That was the reason why General Hinh's "army" was so reluctant to fight and is now rapidly disintegrating, and that was also the reason why his father's so called "strong" government could only achieve a political vacuum which was the Viet Minh's strongest factor of success. It would be foolish and even suicidal to have another try with such "dynamic, strong" men. We really cannot afford to keep throwing non-communist and nationalist Vietnamese into the Viet Minh's arms!

It should be made clear that in the future American help to the French Expeditionary Corps in Viet Nam could be withdrawn at any time when it is not used for the right purposes.

It must also be recalled that the Manila Pact is a better protection for Viet Nam than any French army, that France herself needs her army for her own defense, and that the only advantage of the Geneva armistice is to make possible such a withdrawal and to proclaim Viet Nam full independence. Therefore, everything must be done to help Viet Nam achieve her independence, but not to help the French keep demonstrating at the American tax payers' expenses and for the Viet Minh's benefit, that "their presence" is absolutely, absolutely necessary to Viet Nam.

Indeed, after the cessation of hostilities and after the Manila Pact, Free Viet Nam needs only a real national government, a strong police and a true national army.

There can be no national army and no national government if they are headed by men who have the confidence of the French to a greater degree than that of the Vietnamese.

There can be no police if headed by such men or by gangsters.

That was why Premier Ngo Dinh Diem had to remove General Hinh who was preparing a "*coup d'ètat*". The next step would be to replace the Binh Xuyen at the head of the police.

But for "efficiency" 's sake, the French preferred to side with Hinh and his father and, of course, the Binh Xuyen who are with them for they are the "presumable" winners.

Under such circumstances, the American Government would assume a very grave responsibility in helping the French to maintain their Expeditionary Corps in free Viet Nam. It must not do so without setting a very precise condition.

751G.00/9–2654 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Cameron) to the Department of State

OFFICIAL USE ONLY HANOI, September 26, 1954—6 p. m.

240. Repeated information Saigon 304, Paris 69. As take-over by Viet Minh approaches, Hanoi atmosphere has within past ten days begun to reflect accumulation of developments which began July 20. City's population has dropped as refugees have streamed southward and many others have returned to villages to melt into obscurity. Few people are on streets after early evening hours. French officers still populate one remaining sidewalk cafe but in decreasing numbers. One of handful of French wives may occasionally be seen making last minute shopping tour for souvenirs. International Control Commission personnel are increasingly in evidence with Canadian and Indian uniforms sprinkled among French [garble] in town sections are groups of very obvious roles taking their evening constitutionals in loose military formation. It is a city of "hello" and "good-bye" as old guard takes leave and new teams arrive to continue the show.

French military control of city is gradually tightening although incidents of violence and disorder have been infrequent. Guards have been increased at various military establishments and Legionnaires are now patrolling during daylight hours.

Most good restaurants, bars, and shops are now closed. A few diehard enterprises are hanging on until last few days to gather in few more piasters. City's only French newspaper has long ceased publication. Sharply reduced telephone services are being administered by French Army. Houses and offices are being stripped of furniture and boarded up. In contrast city's three major hotels have been requisitioned for Control Commission and are bustling with activity.

Gasoline is in short supply and lines of vehicles waiting at pumps become longer each day. Food bills are inching upwards and quality items of beef and wine have disappeared from shops. Ho Chi Minh piasters are reported in circulation in some of outlying parts of city. Gialam airport appears virtual ghost camp as traffic gradually dries up. Route five, lifeline to Haiphong, is choked with convoys, busses and taxis picking their way over sixty miles of ruts, holes and flood waters as exodus reaches its final stages.

In this city of change the one constant seems to be the ubiquitous cycles which continue to ply their trade on every corner and street. And along the [garble] of the recently receded Red River the squatters are rebuilding their homes and stoically awaiting the arrival of October 11.

CAMERON

751G.00/9–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, September 27, 1954—4 p. m.
[Received 8 : 55 a. m.]

1250. Repeated information priority Paris 433. Dr. Fishel came to see me September 26 with information Diem had agreed make effort at *rapprochement* with Hinh substantially along line I had discussed with him previously (Embtel 1232, repeated Paris 431).[2] Diem proposed ask Hinh present to him within three or four days plan for national army under direction of Hinh with cooperation civil authorities and all available forces including those of sects to suppress Viet Minh dissidents Free Vietnam. This plan, if approved by President, would become point of departure for reconciliation between Diem and beginning concerted effort against Viet Minh subversion.

Diem proposed Hinh issue at once public statement, approved in advance by President, stating: (1) Hinh had noted with satisfaction other nationalist elements are joining government under leadership Diem to strengthen government in its fight against subversive communism; (2) That Army will also join actively under leadership President so that all will work in harmony against common enemy, the Communist Viet Minh.

When Hinh issued statement and submitted plan President stood ready to issue statement saying:

(1) He is pleased to note new statement by Hinh;
(2) It is time all Vietnamese worked together for salvation Vietnam;
(3) President welcomed cooperation of army in struggle against Communist subversion Free Vietnam; and
(4) In recognition of General Hinh's cooperation President has cancelled earlier instructions to Hinh (meaning President's orders to Hinh leave country on study mission) and directs Hinh take action at once against Communist subversive activity.

Diem stood ready, according to Fishel, to call Hinh in at once, and make this proposal to him. President would be grateful, however, if

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.
[2] Dated Sept. 25, p. 2059.

Hinh could be "prepared" for such reconciliation attempt prior to President's call for him. At my request General O'Daniel, Colonel Lansdale [3] and Embassy First Secretary Meloy called on General Hinh afternoon September 26. Hinh received this group politely but coolly. Without delay, O'Daniel presented proposal saying that if Hinh were willing make immediate public statement along lines indicated above President in turn was willing make statement also as indicated. O'Daniel emphasized that President would annul his order to Hinh directing latter to leave country. He further said that after three or four days President would wish receive from Hinh a plan for combined effort all available forces free Vietnam against subversive communism and that Hinh, remaining as Chief of Staff, would direct this effort.

Hinh reacted with a touch of belligerency, assuming role of wounded party, and indicated a certain amount of resentment that he was thus abruptly asked to make statement reversing position he had clearly taken in his telegram to Bao Dai week before. He indicated he believed statement suggested was "public apology" on his part but it was carefully explained to him this was not so. O'Daniel explained at some length advantages and necessity of all anti-Communist elements free Vietnam joining without delay in common effort to save country. Hinh countered by commencing recital his grievances against government.

Embassy officer interjected saying that unfortunate as past difficulties may have been, purpose of call was not to review past but to discuss as friends what could be done in future. He said US as true friend of Vietnam deeply disturbed at lack of harmony among elements of strength in Vietnam in this dangerous hour. This conversation was in no sense official representation by US Government nor was it intended as adding to pressures to which Hinh was already subjected from many quarters. It might be helpful, however, if views of US Government were made unmistakably clear. Embassy officer said this desire by Diem for *rapprochement* with Hinh was most encouraging in US view. There was nothing humiliating in it to either side and President was in effect offering Hinh opportunity he had long desired to lead effort against Communist subversion according his own plan which President about to request. Embassy officer made clear that while recognizing faults of Diem US believed that at this time there was no other leader available who had better chance lead free Vietnam to strength and security provided he had wholehearted cooperation all patriotic groups and elements. Among these, army was important factor. Without full cooperation army, Diem might well be doomed to failure. US was not tied to Diem nor did Diem have blank check on US support. If, within reasonable period of time, Diem with full cooperation all major elements Vietnam still demonstrated he was unable lead country, US would naturally re-examine its entire position of support. US must in the circumstances, however, remain judge as to what "reasonable time" consisted of and also of whether or not cooperation with Diem were real or only nominal.[4]

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[3] For Lansdale's recollection of his activities in Vietnam during the period June–December 1954, see Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars*, pp. 126–207. See also excerpts from "Lansdale Team's Report on Covert Saigon Mission in 1954 and 1955," in *The Pentagon Papers* [Gravel Edition], vol. I, pp. 573–583. No copy of that report has been found in Department of State files.

Hinh countered, somewhat truculently, by saying US did not know every Vietnamese in Vietnam and he felt we had chosen "wrong candidate". He himself, however, declined or was unable to present name more desirable alternative to Diem with same qualities honesty and nationalism. Hinh then launched into sophistry that army was presently "cooperating" with government and therefore government had no complaint. Embassy officer replied that purpose of visit was not to discuss definition of word "cooperation", that he fully understood what Hinh meant by cooperation in this matter and Hinh also understood what Embassy representative meant by cooperation. Hinh was leader of army and army was important factor in preservation Vietnam. It was our hope army could join government and other elements in wholehearted and concerted effort preserve Free Vietnam. It was entirely uncertain as to whether any successor government to Diem might meet criteria for US support. Meanwhile Diem did meet those criteria and we hoped all elements would join with him. Hinh said army would fight communism "with or without support" and if necessary would "walk barefoot and eat dry rice and fish". Embassy officer replied that it was this very spirit which made army such valuable factor in concerted effort against subversive communism.

Toward end of conversation Hinh appeared much less inclined to belligerency. Colonel Lansdale suggested that all that stood between him and President in unified effort for welfare Vietnam was "piece of paper" and that President was showing willingness brush that aside. Hinh said he would consider matter of reconciliation with President and would naturally have to consult his followers and supporters. When O'Daniel asked when we might expect answer, Hinh replied "in three or four days". When this statement was countered by comment we hoped he would arrive at decision very much more swiftly than that, Hinh complained that "Diem can take three weeks but three days is too much time to allow me". Hinh concluded by saying he would call followers together that very evening and commence discussions with them. He did not commit himself as to when his answer would be ready or what it would be.

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[4] In telegram 1239 to Saigon, Sept. 27, the Department of State expressed regret that General Hinh had been informed that the United States was not tied to Diem. Even though that might in fact be the U.S. position, it was unwise to advertise it to Diem's enemies. (751G.00/9-2754)

It is clear that Hinh, counting on message from Bao Dai dismissing Diem, was not in receptive mood and was playing for time. During conversation there was much activity in nearby office in which Colonel Lam and Captain Giai were participating. It was fairly safe to assume they were busily preparing broadcast over army controlled radio. Unconfirmed report received by USIS said army noon broadcast today had stated army "impatient" with inactivity and delay of government and was about to "punish" government for its inactivity.

Heath

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361

Summary Minute of a Meeting at the Department of State, September 27, 1954, 10 a. m.[1]

SECRET

PARTICIPANTS

State	*Defense*	*FOA*
General Smith	Admiral Carney	Governor Stassen
Mr. Hoover	Admiral Smedberg	Mr. FitzGerald
Mr. MacArthur	Lt. Col. Dwan	Mr. Timmons
Mr. Robertson	Mr. Sullivan	
Mr. Barbour		
Mr. Nolting		
Mr. Young		
Mr. Hoey		
[Mr. Selby]		

The meeting opened with a consideration of the points on the attached agenda.[2] The Acting Secretary then summarized his informal talks with La Chambre on the preceding Saturday morning following the briefing session with the Secretary.[3] General Smith had emphasized the need for a joint political program as a prerequisite for useful military and economic assistance. La Chambre then had indicated French willingness to go along with the Diem government. The French felt that Bao Dai should be removed from the scene in a legal fashion after he had served his purpose. In spite of known pressures on Mendes to drop the Vietnamese government and to deal directly with Ho, the French were ostensibly in accord with our policy toward Vietnam. It was agreed that a joint session with the Associated States representatives would be held at the conclusion of the bilateral talks.

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[1] Drafted by Selby of S/S–RO. Circulated as document ELaC Memo 17, Oct. 6.

[2] Not printed.

[3] For the summary minute of the briefing session of Saturday morning, Sept. 25, see p. 2066; regarding Smith's talk with La Chambre, see telegram 1217 to Saigon, Sept. 25, p. 2070.

The Acting Secretary foresaw that the most difficult aspect of the talks was likely to be accord on the mechanism for military aid to the Associated States, the complications being a possible Mendes–Eden–Chou-en-Lai understanding dating from Geneva. The British have indicated their view, opposed to our own, that direct aid to Cambodia is contrary to Geneva. The Acting Secretary reported that he had just seen the UK Ambassador and informed him, *inter alia*, of the U.S. intention to set up a MAAG in Cambodia.

As to the mechanics of aid, General Smith pointed out that the French want a joint training program in Vietnam chaired by Ely, a point which we would probably have to concede, which would run the risk of a continual veto of the introduction of our techniques. In Cambodia we would administer the aid directly, although a similar joint commission under our chairmanship could be created, with French training officers remaining. The status of Laos under the Geneva agreement is unclear but might be handled by a Laotian-chaired joint group; the Laotians voting our way in any case. The Acting Secretary added that the International Control Commission might become a real problem in this regard if not adroitly handled.

Mr. MacArthur cautioned that the critical item in the discussions would be the Vietnamese political problem, and that we must concentrate on getting agreement there and not let the talks stray into areas beyond the competence of Ely and La Chambre. Our intention to extend military aid directly to the Cambodians should be made clear.

Economic Talks

Gov. Stassen proposed that in discussing economic topics we should adhere to a "study and stall" technique consistent with the overall aim of reversing the current dollar flow to France.

General Smith noted the Secretary's agreement to this aim but added that it was our desire that some elements of the French Expeditionary Corps remain in Indochina since an FE phase-out would have to be spread over time to facilitate the Associated States military build up.

Gov. Stassen stated that the [*he?*] was opposed to writing off Indochina should the French elect to deal with Ho Chi Minh. Gen. Smith indicated concurrence though our military felt that they were already taking a large risk with our material even with French support.

Gov. Stassen assured Mr. Nolting that should cut-off result in the French ceasing troop payments to the Vietnamese National Army, the USOM in Saigon would be in a position to take up the slack with counterpart funds.

Political Approach

Agreement was reached on the approach to the French on political topics as outlined by General Smith moving from the more palatable topics (D–1/3—Policies toward Viet Minh, Bao Dai, and Strengthening of Vietnam) toward those on which we were prepared to take a stern attitude (D–1/1—Diem Government, D–1/2—U.S. Relations with Associated States).[4]

Mr. MacArthur received approval for the constituting of an interagency working group to prepare a draft minute of understanding. (This group met immediately after the briefing session adjourned.)

Military Topics

Mr. Young noted that our general approach was to sound out the French and reserve our position, Admiral Carney concurring. On the possibility of the French proposal to withdraw as raised by Mr. Robertson, Admiral Carney noted that pulling out would be no easy matter, that we should play for time, and if necessary, call their bluff. Gen. Smith expressed doubt that they would more than hint in this regard.

Mr. Robertson emphasized the drastic impact that the loss of Vietnam would have on the rest of Asia. Admiral Carney expressed doubt that the Congress would support an adequate (one-half billion dollars) program without a stable government; Mr. Robertson noting the dependency of political stability on military security, and General Smith stressing the immediate strengthening of Diem which would result from the prompt negotiation of even a small direct training program.

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[4] These position papers are not printed. (Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361)

751G.13/9–2854 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, September 28, 1954—1:46 a. m.

1240. London for Merchant. Limit distribution. At opening political talks LaChambre this afternoon[2] we agreed substantially as follows: France and US support Diem in establishment and maintenance of strong anti-Communist and Nationalist Government and to that end will jointly urge all anti-Communist elements in Vietnam to cooperate fully with Diem Government to counter vigorously Viet Minh and build strong free Vietnam.

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[1] Drafted by Young (PSA) and Barbour (EUR). Also sent niact to Paris as telegram 1135 and to London as telegram 1776.

[2] The meeting under reference occurred on the afternoon of Sept. 27. It is further described in telegram 1138 to Paris, *infra*. Minutes of the session are in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361 and CF 362.

Subsequently, LaChambre has given us text message from Paris to effect that in two interviews with DeJean today Bao Dai expressed astonishment "insolent"[3] intervention by US and French Governments "incompatible with independence"; reported receipt telegram from Diem declaring he can not withdraw as Prime Minister without causing immediate stoppage American aid to Viet Nam; stated continuance Diem could only increase political chaos and risks of bloody incidents Saigon; claimed, in his view, maintenance present team in power would only profit Viet Minh; and suggested, without prompting by DeJean, that Government be constituted under General Xuan which he considers capable assuring cooperation of sects, Army, Catholics of the South and independent personalities. Message adds DeJean, in noting Bao Dai's reservations re confirmation Diem in office, asked that, if he felt necessary to terminate present conflict, he not do so without informing French and allowing enough time to warn French negotiators in Washington. DeJean believes in circumstances would be very difficult and useless to insist in even more forceful fashion on confirmation Diem and, in endorsing Bao Dai suggestion, requests urgent instructions.

Acting Secretary agreed with LaChambre to transmit substance foregoing message Saigon as combined telegram with request for joint or separate views Heath and Daridan.[4]

Reply urgently.

SMITH

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[3] Telegram 1250 to Saigon, Sept. 28, also sent to Paris and London, read as follows: "Because hasty translation second paragraph Deptel 1240 to Saigon erroneously referred to Bao Dai's astonishment 'insolent' intervention by US and French. Word in quotes should read unusual repeat unusual." (751G.13/9–2854)

[4] In telegram 1241 to Saigon, Sept. 28, repeated to Paris and London, the Department of State instructed Heath to bear in mind in formulating his views that at the Sept. 27 meeting, an understanding had been reached on full support for Diem. La Chambre had ruled out Xuan. The Department was not inclined to change its position regarding Diem just because of Bao Dai. (751G.13/9–2854)

Telegram 1265 from Saigon sent later on Sept. 28 read as follows: "This is a joint expression of views of Daridan and Heath. If it is French and US policy to support Diem at this time there is nothing more that can be done here. A possible solution is for Heath to make immediate trip to see Bao Dai via Paris. If his representations are equally unavailing, then appointment of Xuan might result in quick but only very temporary solution of crisis. Both Heath and Daridan are of opinion that Xuan would not be acceptable Prime Minister for long term solution and enduring government." (751G.13/9–2854) In telegram 1266, Heath added the following: "Xuan is a French citizen and a French general officer who has practically forgotten his native tongue. He might plan for a quick but superficial and temporary appeasement of situation but once in he could not be gotten rid of soon. Lacking any real force of his own behind him he would be pawn of Hinh and Binh Xuyen. We should make a try at my persuading Bao Dai to support Diem for a real trial period." (751G.13/9–2854)

751G.00/9–2754 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, September 28, 1954—2 : 57 a. m.
PRIORITY

1138. Satisfactory first meeting LaChambre–Ely–Faure on political subjects held today.[2]

Smith said we understand French policies with respect Indochina influenced in two directions, first opposing Viet Minh and strengthening national government Vietnam while second urges France abandon support anti-Communist groups and attempt make deal with Ho Chi Minh. We sure Mendes-France accepts first course as only acceptable one. Basic US policy is continue oppose growth Communism and strengthen governments of three states.

LaChambre emphasized joint measures needed in military, political, economic spheres. France desired joint economic aid strengthen Associated States. In free Vietnam LaChambre felt situation had deteriorated considerably since Diem and his government have little knowledge of realities. National army had resisted the government. Refugee problem had not been attacked satisfactorily. Viet Minh seized upon vacuum. In Cambodia the French have no immediate anxiety. In Laos, French expect new government soon after Savang returns.

Regarding Diem France preferred an efficient even though anti-French person to a reasonable man who was inefficient. France intends that independence which has been completed in principle will soon be completed in fact. France has abandoned colonialism. Hopes in future to have cultural, military and political missions. Native armies should be built up to insure internal stability and guard against aggression. French wish all French troops could be withdrawn but to do so invites trouble. Implications of Geneva are that no foreign powers can replace France in Indochina. France plans build up Vietnam army now 200,000 to upwards 225,000 formed in 7 or 8 divisions. In Laos present strength 31,000 will be maintained and Cambodia present 33,000 increase to 40,000 by end 1955. FEC now 175,000 be progressively reduced 100,000 by end 1955.

French contemplate formation joint France–US committees including Associated States representatives to set up economic aid programs. Any communiqué arising out of present conference should take note of agreement of coordination of US-French efforts on Indochina.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent priority to Saigon as 1245, to Phnom Penh as 65, to Vientiane as 46, to Hanoi as 356, and to London as Tosec 2.

[2] Regarding this meeting, which was held on the afternoon of Sept. 27, see also telegram 1240 to Saigon, Sept. 28, *supra*. Minutes of meeting are in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361 and CF 362.

Smith replied French policies will receive serious consideration. Most difficult problem Vietnam. Diem government inexperienced but with help of France and US capable being strengthened and maintained. On other hand we see no one. We insist on government both anti-Communist and free of corruption. Diem should move forward with vigorous program, acquire support of sects—and find solution quarrel with army. Also need Bao Dai support our efforts. (At this point Smith read portions Saigon telegram 1250.)[3]

LaChambre replied Diem's deficiencies apparent. Viet Minh have profited by vacuum to vastly increase strength in south. Diem has help most important sects. There remains problem of national army and Binh Xuan [*Xuyen*]. French consider Bao Dai usefulness may end at point where Diem convenes national assembly which could assume former royal powers. We must be careful any assembly not be controlled by Communists. French still think Diem best man. France fully in agreement with US as to importance having chief of government who would not compromise with Viet Minh. Tran Van Huu, General Xuan and Tam unacceptable. Only two choices—Buu Loc and Buu Hoi. Perhaps Buu Loc could be useful as imperial delegate in Saigon but not as president. French unsure Hoi.[4] General Ely agreed LaChambre views concerning Diem.

Smith stated we pleased that French agreed we can both support Diem. Asked Ely how we can handle problem of Army and Hinh. Ely replied Hinh is supple. Rather than lose position would come to terms. Doesn't know of any other Vietnamese who could replace Hinh. General Smith stated we not far apart in assessment Bao Dai.

LaChambre had no objections views expressed by Smith.

Smith said US intends deal directly with states regarding subsidies. LaChambre said France has no objections. Smith said letter to King Cambodia would be delivered after conclusion of current France–US talks.[5]

Comment: We consider first phase of talks satisfactory. French indicated acceptance concept of direct budgetary support states and only small concern at US military training in Cambodia. Regarding Diem French appeared be in almost complete agreement with US. During session French continually emphasized their desire that US policy and programs regarding Indochina be developed jointly. In order formalize the degree of understanding we reached this afternoon we have drawn up a written minute of understanding covering main points and will request formal or informal French assent.

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[3] Dated Sept. 27, p. 2075.

[4] In telegram 1305 from Paris, Sept. 27, Ambassador Dillon reported that the Embassy had indicated its disapproval of Buu Hoi (on the basis of his apparent pro-Viet Minh sympathies) to Raphael-Leygues, who was campaigning for him as the next Prime Minister of Vietnam, and to the French Foreign Ministry. (751G.00/9–2754)

[5] The letter was delivered on Oct. 2; see editorial note, p. 2114.

SMITH

751G.00/9–2854 : Telegram

The Chargé in France (Achilles) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT PARIS, September 28, 1954—2 p. m.

1316. Rptd info niact Saigon 102. Embtel 1308 (Saigon 161).[1] We saw Saint-Mleux[2] this morning per his request and he outlined results DeJean's conversations with Bao Dai yesterday Sept 27 as follows:

DeJean saw Bao Dai yesterday morning and stated he had received instructions from Washington to inform him (Bao Dai) that it was the desire of the Fr and US Govts that he (Bao Dai) call upon Hinh and Binh Xuyen to cooperate with Diem Govt.

Bao Dai replied in substance 1) that Franco-American *démarche* contrary principle Vietnamese independence; 2) that it impossible bring about or insure Diem–Hinh cooperation; and 3) that maintenance Diem in power only furthers Vietminh cause since Diem will never be able form effective Vietnamese Govt. Bao Dai concluded saying he would like discuss *démarche* with his advisers including Buu Loc.

DeJean then saw Bao Dai for second time yesterday afternoon. Bao Dai refused call upon Hinh and Binh Xuyen to cooperate with Diem for reasons already indicated. Instead, Bao Dai said he would like propose for consideration by Fr and US Govts the replacement Diem Govt with govt headed by Gen Xuan. According DeJean, Bao Dai indicated he would take no further affirmative steps in opposition Diem pending Franco-American response regarding his proposal re Xuan.

Saint-Mleux states DeJean arrived Paris last night and results his conversations with Bao Dai cabled Fr delegation Washington about midnight. As indicated reftel, DeJean has reported Bao Dai annoyed by Franco-American *démarche*.

We asked Saint-Mleux what they thought Bao Dai would do if Fr and US Govts reject Bao Dai's proposal regarding Xuan, and he (Saint-Mleux) said they thought Bao Dai might decide go ahead with plan bring about Diem's eventual downfall. At minimum, Saint-Mleux said, they (including DeJean) feel yesterday's *démarche* will restrain Bao Dai from encouraging Hinh or Binh Xuyen further for time being at least.

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[1] See footnote 3, p. 2072.

[2] Principal assistant to Guy La Chambre, Minister for the Associated States.

Emb comment: Although Bao Dai has refused instruct Hinh and Binh Xuyen along lines Franco-American agreement, we feel yesterday's *démarche* will have salutary effect to extent that Bao Dai now aware Fr have decided follow US lead in support Diem and that it appears he (Bao Dai) can no longer count on at least passive Fr support. As consequence, we think Bao Dai may now be inclined give consideration shifting his position to extent he convinced Fr and US Govts in agreement fully support Diem govt regardless his (Bao Dai's) wishes. However, it always possible in interim Hinh and Binh Xuyen, upon learning of *démarche*, and without waiting to hear further from Bao Dai, may decide to take matters in their own hands. In which event, we presume Fr agreement to help block any attempted *coup d'état* by Hinh would appear to be logical consequence Franco-American agreement support Diem.

Please advise whether Dept desires we accompany DeJean when Franco-American response Bao Dai's inquiry re Xuan delivered. If so, we feel this should be made clear LaChambre Washington in order that he may so inform Fr here. We now see no objection such concerted approach.

ACHILLES

751G.13/9–2854 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, September 28, 1954—3 : 50 p. m.
NIACT

1254. Limited distribution. Personal for Ambassador from Smith. We had hoped to receive as a matter of urgency in reply our niact 1240 [2] the combined or differing views of yourself and Daridan whether the policy agreed on yesterday of French and US support for Diem was a workable policy or whether situation has changed now to point where Diem is foredoomed to failure regardless of French and US support. In other words can we make a synthetic strong man of him, and can we associate with him competent people who may compensate for his deficiencies in administrative ability and governing capacity?

I am not unduly concerned about what Bao Dai may do in the situation although he can cause us great trouble.

The real point is can there be built around Diem, on basis of his honesty, integrity and sincerity, a government which with our combined support will be relatively enduring and may eventually attract the allegiance of the three sects and the Army?

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[1] Drafted by Acting Secretary Smith. Repeated to Paris as telegram 1144.
[2] Dated Sept. 28, p. 2080.

Please reply urgently.

SMITH

396.1 LO/9–2854 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at London [1]

CONFIDENTIAL WASHINGTON, September 28, 1954—9:09 p. m.
PRIORITY

Tosec 4. Second meeting with French September 28 on military subjects with Admiral Carney Department Defense representative.[2] Carney expressed view and Ely agreed practical solution military problems subject working out stable political situation particularly Viet Nam and that remarks this meeting be exploration common US–France military problems. Ely expressed close cooperation US–French efforts.

Evacuation Operations: Carney pointed out need improve port management and adequate stevedoring and expressed concern US military shipping in excess needs. Ely emphasized personnel evacuation top priority early stage and recognized full tonnage capacity not used. Noted difficulty obtaining dock personnel and felt this now under control through use armed forces. To 15 September 330,000 civilian military personnel evacuated. Beginning 1 October primary effort will be matériel. Stated categorically no possibility military matériel following [*falling*] into Commie hands. Ely confirmed troop ships could be relieved by end October. Carney said plan leave LST and amphibious ships and would instruct commanders make local arrangements. General Allard said might be additional influx 100,000 at end evacuation but would give US advance warning. Carney asked better medical inspection be provided evacuees prior boarding and expressed view US evacuation ships be exempt pilotage charges Saigon. Ely stated former done; latter noted.

Ely said political situation regarding Viet Nam bad, government had no authority, in full crisis, and Viet Minh clandestinely administering some areas in south. Chaos resulted partly from conflict among the sects, impression disagreement between US–French, and efforts certain elements play US and France against each other. Problem is to unite sects and display US–French cooperation. Security situation would improve when solid government established.

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[1] Drafted by Purnell of PSA. Also sent priority to Paris as 1154, to Saigon as 1264, to Phnom Penh as 70, to Vientiane as 47, and to Hanoi as 359.

[2] The meeting occurred on the morning of Sept. 28; minutes are filed in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361 and CF 362.

Reorganize and develop forces: In response Carney questions Ely said (1) mission FEC is (*a*) contribute insuring integrity 17th parallel demarcation line and security South Viet Nam during re-constitution Viet Nam army (*b*) assist activation Viet Nam army (*c*) if hostilities renewed to provide first echelon allied forces invoked under Manila Pact. (2) Role FEC defensive and temporary. Granting independence to Associated States implies withdraw FEC when no longer needed. Reorganization plan for FEC (*a*) ground forces: 7 divisions 1 infantry brigade, plus general reserve units to be phased down to 4 divisions and 1 infantry brigade by May 55: command autonomy Viet Nam army to be achieved; FEC and Viet Nam forces to be separated; strength reduced to 100,000 by 1 January 56. (*b*) Naval forces proportionate reduction, Air Forces remain present level. (3) Development Viet Nam army: (*a*) increase to strength 220–225,000 in 55. (*b*) achieve divisional organization, first divisions activation early 55. Forces to be 5 infantry and 1 airborne division plus regional security troops. (4) Territorial commands to be transferred Viet Namese. (5) Training: best solution along pattern US in Korea with advisors within divisions. Ely noted absence qualified leaders still acute and Diem had even suggested Frenchman as Chief of Staff but Ely stated first concern to have autonomous Viet Nam army commanded by Viet Namese eventually without French advisors. (6) Equipping Viet Nam Forces: Ely stated equipment now in Viet Nam sufficient for level contemplated and need only for replacement worn-out items. Allard intervened stated present equipment in hands Viet Nam and FEC barely sufficient. Without additional US shipments that tables of equipment would need be scaled down and there no reserve for maintenance. Urged that problem be reviewed and shipment permissible MDAP items stopped July be resumed. Serious difficulties anticipated unless items received to complete repair and reconstitute equipment. Fighter aircraft will be immobilized within weeks unless spare parts sent. Carney noted excess depot stocks which could be used as reserves and suggested inventories be made by US and France and that study be made facilities available storage matériel from north. Carney said could make no commitment resumption flow to FEC noting new post hostilities, conditions, existence depot stocks, prospective reduction FEC all factors to be considered. (7) Possible expansion of MAAG: Ely suggested caution lest violate cease-fire agreement and that subject be considered in its totality.

SMITH

751G.5/9-2854

The Secretary of Defense (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, 28 September 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I refer to discussions between representatives of our respective Departments regarding the establishment of training missions, and the retention and development of forces in the Associated States. In response to a request from this office, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered these matters and have submitted their recommendations to me in memorandums dated 22 September 1954. Copies of these memorandums are attached for your information.

Based on the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendations, members of my staff are preparing talking papers for use in discussions with the French at the forthcoming discussions to begin on 27 September 1954.

Sincerely yours, C. E. WILSON

[Enclosure 1]

Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, 22 September 1954.

Subject: U.S. Assumption of Training Responsibilities in Indochina.

1. This memorandum is in response to the memorandum by the Acting Secretary of Defense, dated 31 August 1954, which requested the comments and recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the State Department views on establishing a MAAG in Cambodia and a training mission in MAAG, Saigon. It also responds to the memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) dated 15 September 1954, which transmitted additional State Department views on Cambodia to be considered in connection with the memorandum of 31 August 1954, and to the memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), subject: "Training for the National Police Force of Vietnam," dated 21 September 1954.[1]

2. In their memorandum for you dated 4 August 1954,[2] subject as above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff set forth certain conditions which they considered should be met before the United States assumes responsibility for training of the Armed Forces of the Associated States. In their memorandum for you, dated 12 August 1954, subject: "Message to the French Prime Minister"[3] the Joint Chiefs of Staff reiterated two of these preconditions in their recommendations concerning the

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[1] The Defense Department communications cited in this paragraph have not been found in Department of State files.

[2] The Aug. 4 memorandum is quoted in the letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State, Aug. 12, p. 1938.

[3] *Ante*, p. 1943.

proposed message to the Prime Minister of France. From a military point of view, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that all of the previously expressed preconditions are still valid and desire to point out that conditions in South Vietnam fall short of meeting these preconditions. In the light of Presidential approval of the message to the Prime Minister of France and in light of Presidential approval of Sections II, III, and IV of NSC 5429/2,[4] the Joint Chiefs of Staff offer no further objection in the establishment of a MAAG in Cambodia. However, the Joint Chiefs of Staff note with concern the unstable political situation presently existing within the state of South Vietnam, and accordingly consider that this is not a propitious time to further indicate United States intentions with respect to the support and training of either the Vietnamese regular or police forces. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend against the assignment of a training mission to MAAG, Saigon.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that special provisions of the bilateral agreement between the United States and Cambodia provide that all French advisors ultimately be withdrawn in order that the United States may deal directly with the Government of Cambodia, completely independent of French participation or control. The Joint Chiefs of Staff further recommend that no commitment be made at this time as to the size or composition of armed forces to be trained and supported, nor to the size and composition of the proposed MAAG in Cambodia, until further study can be given to these matters.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
ARTHUR RADFORD
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

[Enclosure 2]

Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, 22 September 1954.

Subject: Retention and Development of Forces in Indochina.

1. In response to a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 10 September 1954,[5] subject as above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff submit the following views and recommendations.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the provisions of the Geneva Armistice Agreement and the latest National Security Council policies for the Southeast Asia area.

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[4] For NSC 5429/2, "Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East," Aug. 20, 1954, see volume XII.

[5] Not found in Department of State files.

3. The restrictions imposed by the Geneva Armistice Agreement on Cambodia are minor and can be overcome to a degree sufficient to carry out generally the U.S. national policies in that area. The restrictions on Laos are major and permit training assistance and supervision by French instructors only. In Viet Nam the cease fire agreement constitutes a major obstacle to the introduction of adequate U.S. MAAG personnel and of additional arms and equipment.

4. Although the French have not submitted for U.S. study any plans they may have for withdrawal of French forces from Indochina, some informal and general information has been obtained as to their present intentions. Based upon this information and taking into account the estimated capabilities of the three nations of the Associated States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that those forces listed in the Appendix hereto[6] should be retained or developed in Viet Nam and Cambodia. The estimated costs thereof, listed in the Appendix hereto must be re-examined in view of the lack of facts related to condition and quantities of equipment and clothing, quantities of POL, ammunition and arms to be released by the French.

5. Under the terms of the Geneva Armistice Agreement the training of Laotian armed forces may be conducted by French personnel only. However military equipment can be furnished in specified quantities for the defense of Laos through the French.

6. The development of the proposed forces for Viet Nam and Cambodia will require extensive and detailed training which will extend over a period of 3 to 5 years. The French should relinquish over-all command of the Armed Forces of Viet Nam as rapidly as possible with complete removal of forces when the Vietnamese are capable of exercising command of an effective force. The Vietnamese capability along these lines should be developed by intensive training and by progressive promotion of Vietnamese officers to posts in command of larger units and to positions of increased responsibility.

7. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that prior to the assumption of support of the forces of the state of South Viet Nam, a definite agreement should be obtained from the French Government with respect to the timing of their programmed phased withdrawal. The phasing out by the French should be correlated with the ability of the Vietnamese to take over this responsibility from the French, and at the same time assume command.

8. Although introduction of military equipment into Viet Nam above the levels existing at the time of signing the Geneva Armistice Agreement is prohibited, it is estimated that sufficient matériel is available in Viet Nam from that which was previously delivered to

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[6] Not printed.

Indochina for the French Union Forces. The primary problem pertaining to matériel would be to insure that the French, while executing their phased withdrawal from Indochina, leave in Indochina the matériel and equipment required, insofar as available, for the use of the Viet Nam Armed Forces. It should also be emphasized that this matériel and equipment should be left in good operating condition.

9. The supply of items such as pay, food, uniforms, and POL, should be furnished by the Associated States to the maximum extent of their capabilities. However, it is fully recognized that, due to economic conditions in the Associated States, they would require extensive support concerning these items. Such support as may be supplied by the United States should be furnished out of Mutual Security funds administered by Foreign Operations Administration.

10. Indochina is an important part of Southeast Asia and merits limited U.S. support in implementation of national policy in that area. The United States is supporting military programs in this area, which possess a capability of producing effective military forces. In view of the uncertain capabilities of the French and Vietnamese to retrieve, retain, and reorganize the dispersed forces of Vietnam, it may be several years before an effective military force will exist. Therefore, U.S. military support to that area, including the training and equipping of forces, should be accomplished at low priority and not at the expense of other U.S. military programs and should not be permitted to impair the development through MDA programs of effective and reliable allied forces elsewhere.

11. In addition, the Joint Chiefs of Staff note with concern the unstable political situation presently existing within the state of South Viet Nam, and, accordingly, consider that this is not a propitious time to further indicate United States intentions with respect to the support and training of Vietnamese forces.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
ARTHUR RADFORD
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

751G.00/9-2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 29, 1954—5 p. m.

1269. Repeated information Paris 438. This morning September 29, Major Germann, General O'Daniel's aide, went to see General Hinh at Hinh's request. Purpose of conversation was desire Hinh to convey reply to Diem's proposal for *rapprochement* reported Embtel 1250, repeated Paris 433.[1]

Hinh told Germann he and his "friends" agree "in principle" to Diem's proposal. They agree reluctantly to having Diem remain as President only because of US insistence. They would be "happier" with Xuan or Buu Loc as President. Hinh stated his conviction there could be no surge of national unity while Diem remained in office and he was convinced Diem will not be able lead united Vietnam.

Hinh's agreement in principle based on following conditions: (1) Xuan to be Vice President and Defense Minister; (2) Cabinet must be reshuffled to include Binh Xuyen representation. Specifically, Binh Xuyen must have Ministries Interior and National Economy and Surete, which they presently control, must be raised to rank of Secretary State. In this cabinet reshuffle Cao Dai and Hoa Hao influence must not outweigh combination army and Binh Xuyen; (3) Army must nominate candidates for Secretaries of State in Ministry of Youth and Ministry National Defense giving them control of those two posts; (4) Defense Committee must be abolished (Defense Committee is purely honorary and composed of Cao Dai General Phuong and Hoa Hao General Soai); (5) Army must have authority over all echelons in pacification efforts, both civilian and military.

If these proposals are accepted, Hinh stated he would be "inclined to ask for one or two years leave". (*Comment:* This is surprising statement and we do not quite understand Hinh's motive in making it. It must be remembered he has made similar statements previously only to go back on them each time.)

Hinh said if his terms not accepted, "I will carry out *coup d'état*". If for any reason he were prevented carrying out actual *coup d'état* by force, he will set up "rival government" and will go on "austerity basis" which he states will permit him get along without US support or aid. Hinh stated his rival government will control "75 percent of territory" in Free Vietnam. He assured Germann that he believed French would keep hands off even if he attempts *coup d'état.*

Above information has been conveyed to Diem through Dr. Fishel.

HEATH

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[1] Dated Sept. 27, p. 2075.

751G.13/9–2954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, September 29, 1954—4 p. m.

1270. Repeated information niact Paris 439. Limit distribution. Answer to question in Deptel 1254, September 28 (personal from

Smith) is yes. There can be built around Diem a government which with our support will be relatively enduring and may eventually obtain allegiance of sects and army. Diem has support Bao [*Cao*] Dai and Hoa Hao. French must stick loyally with us in getting Diem Government through present crisis and this can be done if we remain united and firm and if Diem Government accepts some necessary compromises. Unfortunately Bao Dai is still factor and I see no way of handling him except by going myself to Cannes. I could be back in four days.

While Diem is only man now in sight with character enough to form and head an enduring government, we must be looking around urgently, as so far we have been doing without success, for a relief pitcher and get him warming up in bullpen. Diem's intrinsic faults may yet create a situation making his replacement necessary.

Army in its present revolutionary mood with Hinh's camarilla in control has to be reckoned with and one concession Diem will probably have to make, and he doesn't want to do it, is to put back Xuan as Minister Defense and Vice President. That I think we could persuade him to do.

To have Xuan replace Diem as Prime Minister would undoubtedly bring a temporary superficial appeasement in this situation. It would only be at cost of very dangerous delay in forming really solid military and government structure here. We have to stick by Diem at this moment.

Above are my views. They are not Daridan's or Salan's who do not believe Diem can form solid government. If it is his government's policy to support Diem, Daridan will naturally not try to sabotage it, but he will implement it here without conviction. He will, I believe, locally cooperate on a Diem solution. His internal political adviser Commissioner Wintrebert, believes thoroughly in Diem solution while recognizing latter's weaknesses.

HEATH

751G.00/9–2954 : Telegram

The Chargé in Cambodia (Colquitt) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, September 29, 1954—7 p. m.

122. Sent Saigon 152. During course of month International Control Commission in Cambodia has reached nearly full complement consisting approximately 120 Indians (including military guard, communications personnel, interpreters and secretariat clerks), 40 Poles (half civilian and half military) and 22 Canadians (mostly military).

In personal conversation Ambassador Parthasarthi, Indian chairman of Commission, stated that implementation Geneva agreement proceeding reasonably satisfactorily, but slowly due to late start and numerous administrative difficulties. In his opinion Viet Minh showing cooperative spirit in abiding by terms of agreement. He admitted that demobilization of Khmer Viet Minh forces had not been satisfactorily completed, but said Commission itself unable determine actual size of forces which "one side did not know and other side would not tell". He explained failure to disarm demobilized Khmer Viet Minh by saying Geneva agreement did not stipulate their disarming.

Viet Minh have accepted Cambodian declaration that armed forces and military combatant personnel of French Union have been withdrawn.

Liberation of prisoners of war has been completed. Cambodians released approximately 500 but Viet Minh only 50, latter claiming to have previously released 200.

Withdrawal Vietnamese Viet Minh forces expected to be completed by 90 day deadline October 22, although concentration delayed and routes of withdrawal from Cambodia not yet determined.

Indian Ambassador and General Sarda Nand Singh told Embassy they think it physically impossible to supervise frontiers concerning introduction into Cambodia of foreign military personnel and war materials, and they contemplating making request to United States and other powers for assurances that they will respect terms of Geneva agreement in this regard. Considering composition of International Commission, Embassy believes that Commission would probably consider direct introduction American military training personnel and war materials as violation Geneva agreement, despite fact that Cambodian Government has right to solicit foreign aid for purpose of effective defense of territory.

Cambodian Government officials have informed Embassy they are not at all satisfied with manner or degree of implementation Geneva agreement. They maintain that only part of Khmer Viet Minh forces were demobilized and that arms should have been surrendered. Cambodian Government is convinced Viet Minh are playing double game and will continue spread Communist propaganda in country and engage in other subversive actions by infiltration. Embassy considers Cambodian views are justified.

Acting Canadian Commissioner told Embassy that he considers Polish delegation is too large and that it is to be further augmented. He added in off record comment that he believes Poles intend use delegation staff for spreading Communist propaganda and Polish Ambassador thinking of utilizing documentary films for propaganda purposes.

For Department's information, Indian chairman of Commission . . . . has told Embassy he considers "Cambodian problem is internal rather than external" and that Commission will eventually consider whether its competence should extend to national elections under general terms of Geneva agreement. Although convinced of Cambodian national independence, he is unfavorably impressed by suppression of legislature, and feels that holding of free elections and reconstitution of representative government is matter of greater ultimate concern than removal of Viet Minh forces, which he does not feel is a great problem. . . .

Canadian head of delegation Ambassador MacDonnell has not yet arrived Phnom Penh. His presence is badly needed here, to counteract Indian attitude and to keep Polish delegation in hand.

COLQUITT

751G.00/9–2954 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, September 29, 1954—12:06 p. m.
PRIORITY

1157. Joint State/FOA message.

1. Third meeting La Chambre–Faure–Ely talks held afternoon September 28 and concerned economic and financial matters.[2]

2. Faure opened with general statement on France economic situation stating there had been considerable improvement past year. Mendes-France's government intends continue 18 months economic program initiated by previous government and Faure stressed need increase productivity and worker purchasing power without renewed inflation in order ensure French participation European cooperation and decrease Communist strength in France. He then proceeded develop French position regarding financing expeditionary corps CY 1955 along following lines:

(*a*) French have decided maintain FEC at reduced level until Viet-nam Army established and can relieve FEC. French cannot finance FEC alone next year, as budget deficit must be kept small as possible while at same time French Government must provide assistance to industry to enable it convert to more competitive basis.

(*b*) French Government does not intend decrease NATO military effort CY 1955 but French public expects decrease expenses for Indochina now war over. Government must make economies military budget as well as civil budget.

(*c*) As long FEC remains Indochina as "echelon of security" for area, and until Viet-nam forces sufficiently developed, it only equitable French receive considerable financial contribution for support FEC.

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[1] Drafted in PSA. Also sent priority to Saigon as 1277, to Phnom Penh as 72, to Vientiane as 48, and to London as Tosec 5.

[2] The minutes of the meeting are in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361 and CF 362.

(*d*) Total costs FEC CY 1955 estimated 175 to 200 billion francs, French propose contribution from own resources of approximately 60 billion francs, balance 115 to 140 billion francs supplied by US. (This compares with total costs of 292 billion francs CY 1954, including French contribution 152 billion francs and US aid 140 billion francs.) French position assumes continuation matériel flow under MDAP program otherwise FEC cost CY 1955 would increase by additional 30 to 40 billion francs. Also noted that aid should cover personnel costs FEC and not only matériel as in 1954; he did not believe US legislation was restrictive this connection this year.

(*e*) Faure stressed France is in agreement with US intention give aid direct Associated States but pointed out this is French concession. Clear implication was it should be taken into account in US decision on aid CY 1955 to FEC.

(*f*) Faure also referred question new OSP contracts in France. He said this not directly related Indochina question but was interested in learning soonest US intentions.

3. In presenting US position Stassen thanked Faure for his statement and proceeded comment on chief points Faure had made. He stated contribution to FEC provided by Congress on basis objectives shared by US and France but which have not been realized. Executive Branch therefore must consult Congress before conclusions can be reached on renegotiation FY 1954 aid program and before any commitment can be made regarding aid from FY 1955 funds. This will result in unavoidable delays in payments under FY 1954 program and in consideration possibility FY 1955 aid. These delays will be kept to minimum. Meanwhile to help relieve budgetary problem Stassen added there need be no delay in release accruing counterpart from pipeline. Stassen referred to several major questions regarding FY 54 program that will have be considered including comparison final costs with those originally foreseen and which formed basis US aid, and problem of material not shipped Indochina. US appreciates information France has already made available and would like have further details. Stassen also noted large proposed reduction in French contribution to FEC between 1954 and 1955.

4. Stassen stated because of Congressional intent reflected in Richards Amendment it also necessary consult with Congress in regard OSP program. French should not anticipate in near future placement new major orders for OSP although orders for replacement parts may be continued. It was also noted there would be unavoidable delays in payments under OSP program.

5. French stressed need for early decision at latest by December 1 in regard both Indochina and OSP programs in view need develop their CY 1955 budget. Stassen indicated US would make every effort meet French deadline. Stassen expressed willingness next meeting this subject be held Paris.

6. La Chambre urged joint US-French economic aid program for AS totaling 93 billion francs over two year period of which French would contribute 20 billion francs. Urged that program be one of immediate impact to influence election and not long term public works. Emphasized importance land reform. General Smith welcomed soundness such program without grandiose schemes which would have effect only in distant future. Also assured French that in preparing channel aid directly idea is to enhance prestige Associated States Governments and not replace French.

6. [7.] Stassen and General Smith emphasized importance Associated States direct participation in planning and coordination French and US aid programs.

SMITH

S/P–NSC files, lot 62 D 1, "Indochina"

Department of State Press Release No. 542

[WASHINGTON,] September 29, 1954.

COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE WASHINGTON TALKS ON INDOCHINA [1]

Following is the text of the communiqué based upon the exchange of views September 27–29, 1954, between Acting Secretary of State W. Bedell Smith, M. Guy LaChambre, French Minister of State for Relations with the three Associated States, and M. Edgar Faure, Finance Minister of France.

Representatives of the two Governments have had very frank and useful talks which have shown the community of their views, and are in full agreement on the objectives to be attained.

The conclusion of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty in Manila on September 8, 1954, has provided a firmer basis than heretofore to assist the free nations of Asia in developing and maintaining their independence and security. The representatives of France and the United States wish to reaffirm the support of their Governments for the principles of self-government, independence, justice and liberty proclaimed by the Pacific Charter in Manila on September 8, 1954.

The representatives of France and the United States reaffirm the intention of their governments to support the complete independence of Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam. Both France and the United States will continue to assist Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam in their efforts to safeguard their freedom and independence and to advance the welfare of their peoples. In this spirit France and the United States are assisting the Government of Viet-Nam in the resettlement of the Vietnamese who have of their own free will moved to free Viet-Nam and who already number some 300,000.

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[1] **The meetings held on the final day of the conference, Sept. 29, are summarized in telegram Tosec 7 to London, Sept. 30, *infra*.**

In order to contribute to the security of the area pending the further development of national forces for this purpose, the representatives of France indicated that France is prepared to retain forces of its Expeditionary Corps, in agreement with the government concerned, within the limits permitted under the Geneva Agreements and to an extent to be determined. The United States will consider the question of financial assistance for the Expeditionary Corps in these circumstances in addition to support for the forces of each of the three Associated States. These questions vitally affect each of the three Associated States and are being fully discussed with them.

The channel for French and United States economic aid, budgetary support and other assistance to each of the Associated States will be direct to that state. The United States representatives will begin discussions soon with the respective governments of the Associated States regarding direct aid. The methods for efficient coordination of French and United States aid programs to each of the three Associated States are under consideration and will be developed in discussions with each of these states.

After the bilateral talks, the chiefs of diplomatic missions in Washington of Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam were invited to a final meeting to have an exchange of views and information on these matters. The representatives of all five countries are in complete agreement on the objectives of peace and freedom to be achieved in Indochina.

396.1 LO/9–3054 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at London[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, September 30, 1954—12:41 a. m.

Tosec 7. Following summary final meetings September 29 on Indochina.[2] Small restricted US-French meeting held with General Smith in morning. Approved minute of understanding and top secret implementation thereof, both contained in subsequent telegrams.[3] Also approved draft communiqué for discussion afternoon meeting with three Associated States representatives.

After discussion problem of providing French forces with certain necessary spare parts, General Smith took up political situation Vietnam. Read Saigon's 1270 [4] to effect relatively effective government can be built around Diem, stick by him at this moment, but also look around for relief pitcher in case Diem does fail. Heath suggested he go to Cannes explain situation Bao Dai. LaChambre agreed this suggestion. (Orders subsequently sent Heath.)

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[1] Drafted by Young and Hoey of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as 1296, to Paris as 1175, to Phnom Penh as 75, and to Vientiane as 50.

[2] Minutes of the meetings summarized in this telegram are in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361.

[3] See telegrams Tosec 8 and Tosec 9 to London, Sept. 30, *infra* and p. 2101, respectively.

LaChambre agreed completely with reftel. Stated in "first phase" France and US must bolster Diem without reservations and give him chance succeed. However LaChambre emphasized cannct afford long delays in seriously deteriorating situation or risk civil war. Expeditionary Corps obligated maintain order but not in Indochina for that purpose. Consequently under such circumstances US and France must envisage what steps to take should Diem fail. He rejected General Xuan as Prime Minister since puppet Binh Xuyen, but would endorse Xuan as Defense Mnister. Ely agreed this latter role for Xuan if means for reconciling Diem and Hinh. In LaChambre's view if Diem fails despite our "real thorough assistance" must resort asking Bao Dai delegate general powers to Buu Loc to settle situation by forming government with himself or someone else as Prime Minister in government of national union including Diem in cabinet.

If Heath goes Cannes should have instructions impress Bao Dai have army and Binh Xuyen support Diem but if Bao Dai adamant against Diem Heath and deJean should ask Bao Dai give powers to Buu Loc. Smith and LaChambre agreed send additional separate telegrams respectively Heath and Daridan re tentative Buu Loc alternative to any failure Diem government. (Message concerning this matter will be available Heath Paris prior his visit Bao Dai.)[5]

Ely said he was ready support Diem to utmost with no hesitation and thoroughly agreed with LaChambre in case failure Diem create and maintain broad stable government. Smith agreed that while chances perhaps dubious we must both strive create strong government around Diem.

In discussing minute of understanding LaChambre pressed vigorously for agreement on establishment joint committees on aid to three Associated States, i.e., US-French, on grounds French and US paying for aid and should determine objectives, plans and implementation prior to discussion with each of Associated States. Objected to adding three Associated States on "basis of equality". Smith pointed out mandate of Congress on direct US aid to three Associated States, and planning and coordination would require appropriate and effective machinery which might well be tripartite.

After settling on minute, etc., LaChambre concluded with appreciation for General Smith's assistance, and understanding these talks.

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[4] Dated Sept. 29, p. 2092.

[5] See telegram 1327 to Saigon (1195 to Paris), Oct. 1, p. 2110.

Final meeting afternoon 29th included representatives Associated States. Robertson summarized progress made during meetings emphasizing no decisions made concerning internal matters Associated States inconsistent with bilateral nature talks. Went on point out full agreement reached on concept complete independence for Associated States and that US budgetary support be granted them direct in future. LaChambre vigorously stressed reality independence three states and common accord with US. Pointedly alluded impossibility Indochinese provoke divergence between France and US.

Vietnamese Ambassador and LaChambre conducted spirited and rather heated exchange concerning Vietnamese release to American press 28th to effect French Expeditionary Corps should be withdrawn by March 1956. Tenor French response was indignation at ungratefulness such announcement and that FEC prepared be withdrawn "tomorrow." Vietnamese reply along lines present government first with enough courage announce real truth of Vietnamese desires and that FEC needed more at home than in Asia.

Lao statement mild, conciliatory and gracious. Appreciated what done for them. Cambodian Amb. approved and asked if military aid would be direct. Answered affirmatively.

All approved final paragraph communiqué stating they informed of proceedings and in agreement with talk's objectives. This final paragraph drafted and submitted during afternoon meeting.

Complimentary references by all to General Smith's retirement 30th.

After meeting Cambodian Ambassador presented letter from Foreign Minister thanking Smith for Geneva help.[6] Ely had short visit with Smith to be followed 30th by LaChambre call prior his departure 30th for Saigon via Pacific.

SMITH

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[6] Not printed.

396.1 LO/9–3054 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at London[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, September 30, 1954—12:43 a.m.

Tosec 8. Re preceding telegram.[2] Follows text minute of understanding agreed by US-French representatives today.

"France and United States will continue support independence Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. This will include the completion transfer of powers in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, to free governments these States on orderly and progressive basis.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as 1297, to Paris as 1176, to Phnom Penh as 76, and to Vientiane as 51.

[2] *Supra.*

We agree Viet Minh represents Communist force aggressively opposed to ideals and interests of free peoples of Associated States, France and United States. We will firmly oppose extension influence or control of Viet Minh movement having in mind positions taken by respective Governments in connection with Geneva agreements.

We will work toward political, military and economic goals in Indochina which will strengthen each of Associated States' Governments and which will enable them maintain their independence. To this end, we are considering programs both economic assistance and aid to national armies enable latter assume full responsibility for defense their territories, to which French Forces Laos and Vietnam now contribute. The channel for French and U.S. economic aid, budgetary support and other assistance to each of Associated States will be direct to each state. Such programs will be planned and closely coordinated to assure maximum effectiveness through appropriate machinery established in agreement with interested Governments.

With respect to Vietnam, the representatives of France and United States agree their respective governments support M. Ngo Dinh Diem in establishment and maintenance of a strong, anti-Communist and nationalist government. To this end France and the United States will urge all anti-Communist elements in Vietnam cooperate fully with Government of Ngo Dinh Diem in order counter vigorously the Viet Minh and build a strong free Vietnam."

We believe agreed points constitute highly useful support our policy.

SMITH

751G.00/9–3054 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at London [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, September 30, 1954—12:43 a.m.

Tosec 9. Re preceding telegram.[2] Follows text of message which approved by US and French delegations for transmittal to respective missions Saigon.

"In French-US discussions here, we and French have reached conclusion we should support Diem in establishment and maintenance of strong, anti-Communist nationalist government. To this end France and US will both urge all anti-Communist elements in Viet-Nam cooperate fully with government of Ngo Dinh Diem.

We recognize five key elements which can provide a stable anti-Communist nationalist government under Diem's leadership with chance of success: Bao Dai, Hinh and national army and three sects.

As result our discussions we giving consideration to action along following lines and desire your comments:

The problems relating to Chief of State will require further consideration when Government of Viet-Nam consolidated. Under present circumstances further *démarches* should be made jointly or separately to Bao Dai emphasizing consequences in terms of US and French support of failure on his part act in such way to strengthen Diem Government. French and United States representatives Saigon, who should be given broad delegation powers for this purpose, should encourage Diem support our actions re Bao Dai with appropriate measures within competence Vietnamese Government.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Repeated for information to Saigon as 1298, to Paris as 1177, to Phnom Penh as 77, and to Vientiane as 52.

[2] Reference is to Tosec 7, p. 2098.

With respect to General Hinh, it essential that Chief Staff obey orders given by civil authority. However, at same time, it most difficult find replacement for him. Consequently, *démarches* should be made to General Hinh and President Diem towards reconciliation. It would be emphasized that France and United States are firmly supporting President Diem and that once his position consolidated and only then extensive program designed to develop national army under General Hinh could be undertaken. There remains problem of who would be Minister of Defense over Hinh. In the future, relations with Hinh as Chief Staff, should be limited purely military matters in effort discourage him from entering into political affairs.

Sects play an essential role in their respective territories but have limited importance on national scale. Sects have maintained flexible positions with regard Diem, Viet Minh, Bao Dai, France and the United States. It of vital importance that France and the United States maintain carefully coordinated strategy towards sects. Sects should be informed of intent of United States and France with regard support for Diem. Diem might be advised attempt influence sects through his handling of integration of their forces into national army and through ability grant them administrative control over areas being evacuated by Viet Minh. The representatives in Vietnam of France and United States should be given broadest possible delegation of powers to determine coordinated positions these matters.

With specific regard to Binh Xuyen recognized that whatever their unsatisfactory and undesirable qualities may be, their position of power should not be underestimated particularly as they control police, are closely tied in with Bao Dai, and in past have been responsible for extensive terroristic activity in Saigon.

Therefore, our course of action should be to seek to isolate the Binh Xuyen particularly from Bao Dai and to minimize their power and influence through strengthening national army as counter. This can only be achieved progressively. At present time it seems necessary to associate them with the government, which might in long run be best method to be in position control them."

As noted third paragraph above, Saigon comments requested regarding specific means by which we could carry out courses action included above text.

French Delegation requests text above included within quotes be given Daridan with explanation this sent by US channels their request for his comments.

SMITH

110.11 DU/9-3054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Department of State

SECRET LONDON, September 30, 1954—11 p. m.
[Received 5:46 a. m.]

Dulte 11. For Acting Secretary from Secretary. Congratulate you most heartily on results of conversations with French regarding Indochina. These seem fully to sustain US policy. Mendes-France told me that he too thought the talks had gone well, although he deplored the grant of US financial aid direct to Associated States. He said that they did not need the dollars while France did. He said France gave counterpart francs which were used by Associated States in France for needed imports. I pointed out that probably the dollar would be used in much the same way, and he agreed since he said the commercial ties of the Associated States were with France so it would be normal for them to continue old channels.

DULLES

751G.00/9-3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, September 30, 1954.
[Received 9:14 a. m.]

1278. Repeated information Paris 440. I saw Daridan this morning and brought him up to date on Hinh's counter-positions (my telegram 1269, repeated Paris 438)[1] to Diem's extremely generous peace offer to Hinh (my telegram 1250).[2]

Daridan said immediately that Hinh's attempting to impose conditions, and intolerable conditions, on government in exchange for his promise to be obedient was outrageous and his threat to make *coup d'état* if these conditions not accepted *in toto* was shocking.

I qualified Hinh's conduct in even stronger terms and mentioned Hinh had ridiculed and attacked government to foreigners and Vietnamese at receptions and had dropped publicly scarcely veiled hints that if this government did not get out army would revolt. I said that Quat and others who had been in touch with Hinh and his camarilla of young and too rapidly promoted officers confirmed that they were in mood to stage a revolution. Casting around for solution, it seemed to me that it would be necessary to call in not merely Hinh but his conspirators on General Staff as well and say to them that US and France were discussing program for build-up and support of Vietnamese Na-

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[1] Dated Sept. 29, p. 2091.
[2] Dated Sept. 27, p. 2075.

nal Army, which could only be maintained and developed through French and American assistance; that our willingness to continue such material support, indeed continuance of moral support of free world, was prejudiced by reports that army was imposing intolerable conditions on legally constituted government and threatening revolt if they were not complied with; that it was realized mistakes had been made by Diem Government in handling army but that Diem had made generous offer and guaranteed that integrity of army would be preserved and that guarantee would be backed up by France and US. I said it would be better if Ely could preside at such meeting but he would not return before October 4 and some action should be taken now. I suggested that someone from our military mission, perhaps General O'Daniel, might be present at this meeting as silent observer. He would let French General deliver sermon but his presence there would give corroboration to it. I was dubious that Salan, who in Ely's absence was Commander-in-Chief, would be relied on to deliver an impressive warning of this kind, since at the least Salan had not discouraged Hinh and his camarilla. Daridan agreed to that and said he was afraid that Salan unaccompanied might deliver warning but would wink while he did so. I said it would be imperative then for Daridan to be present.

I remarked that ideal solution would be for Hinh to leave Vietnam but Hinh had on record President's offer to let him remain if he ceased politicking and plotting. Daridan agreed but said that his personal solution would be for both Diem and Hinh to leave. I said I could not agree since (1) Diem's departure would be victory for army and its resistance to civil authority even if Hinh left, (2) there was no capable successor in sight for Diem and General Xuan or Buu Loc would be the tools and not the masters of army group, and (3) both our governments had agreed to support Diem. Daridan said he understood that our governments had agreed to support Diem but he had had no final definite instructions to that effect. Without them he would of course nevertheless support Diem.

Daridan said project of calling in Hinh and officers was probably only solution but it required some study because we had to face possibility that officers would not accept warning but would get their backs up and go ahead with revolution. Hinh and his officers had already been warned by Ely that military regime resulting from *coup d'état* of army would not be recognized by France, US, or free world, but this had not deterred them from planning *coup d'état* if Diem Government refused meet their demands. I observed I understood French High Command gave Vietnamese National Army three days supply of munitions and gasoline. This was more than enough for them to attempt and quite possibly succeed in revolt in Saigon if not opposed by French military force. One possible insurance against military coup would be to cut down supplies below three days. Daridan said this might be part of solution and he would examine it with Salan. He promised to let me know results of consultations by end of day.

I believe that in these grave circumstances following action should be taken: (1) President should telegraph and publish message to Diem proposed in Deptel 636 September [*August*] 18;[3] (2) French Government should follow with some statement of support for Diem Government; (3) Daridan should be unequivocally instructed by his government to deliver warning to Hinh and his ranking staff officers along line I proposed to Daridan; (4) I should be authorized, in consultation and coordination with French, to make known to Hinh and his staff officers that we will not give one penny of budgetary support for Vietnamese defense forces if they overthrow legal government and fail to keep their army out of politics (I have already more than implied this in our discussions with Hinh).

HEATH

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[3] For telegram 610 to Paris, Aug. 18, repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 636, see p. 1957.

751G.00/10–154 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 1, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received 10:02 a. m.]

1296. Sent Paris 445. Paris for Ambassador Heath. Vietnamese emissary of General Xuan in commenting on Bao Dai's telegrams reported Embassy telegram 1286, repeated Paris 442[1] speculates Bao Dai's intention was force Diem to resign. Vietnamese believe he would "lose too much face" and be obviously powerless should he accept arrangement suggested by Bao Dai take into Cabinet his sworn enemies (this seems to us to be reasonable assumption).

Daridan has just been in touch with us to say he is sending Wintrebert to Diem to advise President either to accept Bao Dai's instructions or to play for time but in no event to refuse. When we commented to Daridan that for Diem to accept literal instructions from Bao Dai would leave him completely powerless, Daridan replied "but that is what you people have been talking about for some time isn't it? You want Diem but don't mind if he is a powerless figurehead". It was pointed out to him US wished Diem to lead government supported by as many groups and forces Vietnam as possible but did not wish him be their prisoner and completely powerless. Daridan was informed we had sent message Diem also counseling under no circumstances refuse flatly but to play for time pending Ambassador Heath's conversations with Bao Dai and further developments.

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[1] Telegram 1286 from Saigon, Oct. 1, not printed, contained the text of a telegram released in Saigon that day from Bao Dai to Ngo Dinh Diem in which the Chief of State requested the Premier to invite Generals Nguyen Van Hinh, Le Van Vien, and Nguyen Van Xuan to join his government, the latter as Vice Premier. Telegram 1286 also included the text of a message from Bao Dai to Hinh asking him to participate in the Diem government, and portions of a similar telegram from Bao Dai to Le Van Vien. (751G.00/1–1054)

Daridan said if Diem temporized or played for time he, Daridan, would carry out his plan leave tomorrow for Hue. If, however, Diem refused Daridan would remain Saigon as he would in that event expect trouble.

We ourselves believe that if Diem should refuse or give indications he is about to refuse Bao Dai's instructions next move could very well be telegram from Bao Dai dismissing him at once and appointing General Xuan President. General Hinh and Binh Xuyen would be only too glad enforce Bao Dai's order in this event taking cover of legality for their *coup d'état* against Diem. Unless Diem promptly releases Bao Dai's telegram to him together with his own temporizing reply we believe there is danger sudden stroke of force against Diem over this weekend.

General Hinh, Binh Xuyen representatives and General Xuan held press conference at 5 o'clock at which Xuan was spokesman. They released texts Bao Dai telegrams to Bay Vien and Hinh and made statement to effect they had now received Bao Dai's instructions which they interpret as orders and will take no further action at this time themselves. It is up to Diem to comply with Bao Dai's orders and if he does not do so Diem will be a "rebel".

Fishel telephoned 6:45 p. m. from Palace to say Wintrebert, in addition to counseling prompt temporizing reply to Bao Dai, had raised with Diem question authenticity Bao Dai telegram. According Fishel, Diem was favorably inclined accept advice regarding nature his reply and was considering enquiring privately into authenticity messages through his brother Luyen now in France.

CAMERON

State–JCS meetings, lot 61 D 417

Substance of Discussions of State–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting at the Pentagon Building, Friday, October 1, 1954, 11:30 a.m.[1]

TOP SECRET

[Here follow a list of those present (32) and discussion of a subject other than Indochina.]

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[1] This State Department draft was not cleared with the participants.

Indochina

Mr. Murphy introduced this subject by remarking that he understood the JCS were currently informed on these conversations through their own representatives. To clarify, however, he called on Mr. Robertson to give a review on the agreement reached with the French representatives (Faure, Ely and La Chambre) on Indochina.

In giving a general review, Mr. Robertson emphasized that the State Department representatives had made no definite commitments with reference to financial assistance either for the French Expeditionary Corps, or for the Indochinese Nationalist forces.

In discussing the Diem–Hinh controversy, Mr. Robertson stated that it was the view of the U.S. Government that Diem was the best man, though he had many serious defects. Hinh, he said, had put up impossible conditions for his participation in the Diem government. The French were definitely pessimistic regarding Diem. Ambassador Heath, Mr. Robertson continued, was to arrive in Paris that day in connection with a direct approach to Bao Dai looking toward a resolution of the crisis in Vietnam.

In the Ely–La Chambre talks, Mr. Robertson said, it was agreed that the U.S. would give direct aid to the Associated States and would not work through the French.

Admiral Davis interjected to say that the discussion of training missions for Cambodia and Vietnam was somewhat confused and did not indicate definitely the respective parts to be played in such programs by the U.S. and France.

Admiral Radford said that as he understood it, General Smith had told the French representatives that we planned to keep French advisers in Cambodia. The Admiral said that it was the opinion of the JCS that if the U.S. undertook an aid and training program for Cambodia, this country should be in a position to make its own decision as to what extent the French participate.

Elaborating, Mr. MacArthur said that it was understood that the U.S. was to lead the training program for Cambodia, but that this did not mean the exclusion of France. Obviously, for example, it would be necessary to supplement purely U.S. cadres with people who spoke French, possibly Frenchmen.

Admiral Radford said that the JCS believe that we should not permit the French to believe that they have a *right* in the program in Cambodia.

On the other hand, Mr. MacArthur remarked, if Cambodia wants the French to participate, it would be unfortunate if we were forced to take the position with the Cambodians that it had been agreed that France should be excluded.

Admiral Radford continued that as he saw it, we would make the usual bilateral arrangements with Cambodia, and that we could take up the relation of France to the bilateral agreement from there. Bringing the French in now, the Admiral stressed, would create difficulties if it turned out that Cambodia did not want France to participate.

(It was brought out at this juncture, following a query of Admiral Radford, that Ambassador McClintock was that same day presenting the letter from the President to the King of Cambodia together with his letters of credence.)[2]

At the conclusion of this phase of the discussion with respect to Indochina, Mr. MacArthur and Mr. Robertson agreed that we had not committed ourselves to a joint French–U.S. mission to Cambodia.

Admiral Radford then turned his attention to Vietnam. As he understood it, he said, there was no substantive agreement about a training mission in Vietnam. Mr. Robertson said that under the Geneva agreement, this subject was left vague.

Continuing, Admiral Radford recalled that when he had seen General Ely in Washington last April, General Ely had turned down our suggestion that we participate in a training program; that when General Ely had returned to Saigon in May, he had decided, and had informed us, that we should participate in the training program; and that General Ely now expresses surprise that we did not take over the training program at that juncture. Admiral Radford indicated that he had told General Ely that at that particular juncture we were not certain in our own minds exactly where the French were going.

Admiral Radford reverted to the Diem–Hinh controversy. He called on Mr. Kidder for comment. Mr. Kidder[3] said that the key to the situation was Emperor Bao Dai: all depends on His Majesty. Compromise, Mr. Kidder noted, would leave Hinh with the free hand, which would be unfortunate.

Admiral Radford remarked that in his opinion our instructions to Ambassador Heath, in which we permitted him latitude as to whether or not to give all-out support to Diem, was like "throwing the football into the grandstand". In the Admiral's opinion, the Ambassador should be given no alternatives: he should be told to support Diem.

Mr. Murphy inquired as to how things would be effected if Hinh were in some way eliminated. Mr. Kidder gave it as his opinion that this would be a healthy development.

Referring to leadership among the local population, Admiral Radford noted that the Vietminh apparently did not lack for leaders whereas the Vietnamese had developed none, and that the Government was rendered powerless by the machinations of a Captain in the Air

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[2] The letter was actually delivered on Oct. 2; see editorial note, p. 2114.

[3] Randolph A. Kidder, Counselor of Embassy at Saigon; on visit in Washington.

Force. In the Admiral's opinion, we could do just as much with the Vietnamese as the Vietminh had been able to do with their own people. He saw calculated French policy in the present lack of leadership in the southern part of the country. In the Admiral's opinion, the French army had rendered aid and comfort to Hinh.

Concluding this portion of the discussion, Admiral Radford stated that in his opinion, the net result of our conversations with the French regarding Vietnam was: *not good.*

[Here follows discussion of other subjects.]

751G.13/10–154 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 1, 1954—12:41 p. m.
NIACT

1194. Limit distribution. Paris pass Heath. For Heath: General Ely will expect talk you Saturday [2] if possible and will leave his address at Embassy.

Decision order you France to talk with Bao Dai has arisen out of your own recommendations as well as conclusion reached by Department approaches to him by French, purporting speak for United States, unsatisfactory method handling this important matter.

General Smith agreed with La Chambre and Ely morning Sept 30 that separate consecutive approaches better be made Bao Dai by Ely and you. La Chambre concurs. If you deem otherwise leave to your judgement in working it out with Ely. Ely scheduled leave Paris for Saigon Sunday or Monday and intends see you after his separate and prior meeting with Bao Dai.

Embassy Paris will have available Department's report on US-French talks and agreements reached. French have committed themselves support Diem although they convinced he cannot survive even with French and US support. They asked our views concerning a possible successor and have proposed consideration be given Buu Loc. (See our next following telegram.) [3] We strongly believe that effort consolidate Diem's position would not be enhanced at this time by either French or US discussions of alternate with Bao Dai. LaChambre and Ely informed and agreed.

In your talks with Bao Dai recommend you follow line which in your opinion will be most rewarding in achieving his support Diem plus including action at least neutralize active opposition of Binh Xuyen and Hinh. If not active cooperation what we want from Bao Dai as well as what we believe we have obtained from French is a reasonable period of time during which, with our support and in absence organized or inspired opposition, Diem can make an effort, and we hope achieve, a strongly nationalist, anti-Communist government.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent niact to Saigon as telegram 1326 and to London as Tosec 15.

[2] Oct. 2.

[3] *Infra.*

We realize Bao Dai has apparently made a deal with the Binh Xuyen and might have difficulty in reversing such commitment. You might question future ability Binh Xuyen enjoy gambling monopoly, (with corollary of questionable ability to pay). This left your discretion. Hinh has proven he not amenable orders of legal government. Only conclusion is he will likewise show disloyalty to any other legal government. Bao Dai should instruct him prove loyalty and patriotism as soldier by carrying out his orders.

You may make point we are not wedded Diem as person but as a nationalist leader of unquestioned honesty and proven anti-Communist convictions. While he may have his shortcomings, examination alternate chiefs government makes us concerned however, lest those apparently available would not form government qualified receive American aid and support. In view your extensive knowledge what makes Bao Dai tick, we leave your discretion best method obtaining results we want. At your discretion might wish inform Bao Dai President has signed letter to President Council of Ministers.[4] (Paris has original text without your suggestion which later incorporated.) If strengthens your hand might inform him you prepared deliver this personal letter when return Saigon confirm US support.

SMITH

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[4] For President Eisenhower's letter to President Diem, Oct. 23, see p. 2166.

396.1 LO/10–154: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 1, 1954—12:42 p. m.
NIACT

1327. Limit distribution. Paris pass Heath. There follows text message agreed between Smith–LaChambre September 30 for transmittal respective representatives Saigon. Note that this text, written by US, is considerably less definite concerning Buu Loc than was suggested by French in meeting on twenty ninth reported fifth paragraph Deptel 1296 Saigon repeated Paris 1175.[2] US view is as stated preceding telegram that not useful weaken arguments for support Diem by disclosure consideration of successor and that Diem deserves breathing spell to take advantage "additional support". In our view latter phrase includes French promises to support Diem. Saigon authorized give text following message Daridan, omitting reference Deptel, although French have stated will transmit independently.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent niact to Paris as telegram 1195 and to London as Tosec 16.

[2] For Tosec 7 to London, Sept. 30, also sent to Saigon as telegram 1296 and to Paris as telegram 1175, see p. 2098.

"In addition to our instruction concerning support of Diem (Deptel 1297) [3] we believe prudent bear in mind possibility that despite our best efforts he may be unable maintain strong government due opposition factors beyond his control, or in spite of our support.

As one possible approach this contingency, French have suggested that Bao Dai be recommended choose a 'delegate general' who could be Buu Loc. He would be empowered by Bao Dai go Saigon form government national union himself, including Diem or to select personality capable of forming such government.

We would be unwilling to in any way prejudice Diem's effort, which is fully backed by French and ourselves by allowing it be known we considering successor. Therefore, purpose this message to obtain your reaction French suggestion. Believe we should base our judgment of Diem's success henceforth on basis fair and reasonable chance with wholehearted US-French backing in order he be able take advantage additional support."

SMITH

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[3] For Tosec 8 to London, Sept. 30, also sent to Saigon as telegram 1297 and to Paris as telegram 1176, see p. 2100.

751G.00/9-2954 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, October 1, 1954—1:19 p. m.

1328. Paris pass Heath. Saigon's 1269 rptd Paris 438.[2] In half hour conversation with General Ely [3] Kidder outlined contents ref telegram which Ely believes may offer basis for compromise with Binh Xuyen on Ministry of Interior.

He appears sincerely convinced necessity give Diem Govt fair chance prove self. Explained it his personal view if Diem Government fails object having Bao Dai send Buu Loc Vietnam would be for latter have delegation powers choose successor to Diem rather than form government himself.

Re statement in press here by Vietnamese Ambassador regarding withdrawal French Expeditionary Corps by March 1956 Ely said this would necessitate planning withdrawal forces very shortly. This he believes would be dangerous as would undermine confidence of people free Vietnam.

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[1] Drafted by Kidder. Also sent to Paris as telegram 1196.
[2] Dated Sept. 29, p. 2091.
[3] The conversation took place on Sept. 30.

Ely inquired into reason for difference between Ambassador Saigon and Daridan and speculated that Daridan is so opposed Diem that it colors his views, nevertheless Ely says Daridan will have to follow instructions and go along with agreed decision France and US support Diem government.

Ely also speculated on possibility, in case failure Diem Government, Bao Dai might return Vietnam take over power himself, as last chance. He pointed out Bao Dai has always felt constrained by French but with complete independence of action he might prove more effective than previously.

In reply Ely's question Kidder expressed view it would be preferable for him and Ambassador Heath see Bao Dai separately. A joint *démarche* could be made subsequently if for any reason desirable.

Young saw Ely shortly thereafter who agreed desirability give Diem chance and advisability separate approaches Bao Dai. Also felt Hinh only available choice Chief Staff but should be limited to military matters.

SMITH

751G.00/10–154 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy at Saigon [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, October 1, 1954—6 : 36 p. m.

1340. For Cameron [2] from Acting Secretary. Your 1296, Oct. 1. I am astonished at Daridan's comment mentioned in the second paragraph of reference message and as he is a personal friend for whom I have high regard and respect, I would be glad if you would tell him so for me.

It could not be a greater misestimate of what both France and US wish to produce in Viet Nam. I admit that there are greater differences of view as to whether a government under Diem leadership can be made effective and capable, but at the recent conferences held we all agreed that we saw practically nothing else on the horizon.

Both La Chambre and Ely took into account the pessimistic view of Daridan and Salan but decided that we had no other present alternative but to attempt—as I told Heath in previous message—by our united efforts to bolster up and support the Vietnamese government. This is what we will try to do.

SMITH

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[1] Drafted by the Acting Secretary. Repeated to Paris as telegram 1209.

[2] Turner C. Cameron, Jr., Chargé at Saigon.

751G.5 MSP/10–254 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, October 2, 1954—7 p. m.

1310. Repeated information Paris 450. Following is translation text of note dated September 30 from Foreign Minister:

"Mr. Ambassador:

"I have honor to inform you that simultaneously with increased responsibilities which it is assuming in civilian administration of country as well as in conduct of its foreign affairs, Vietnamese Government wishes directly to participate in negotiations concerning military future of Vietnam.

"Until now, need for a single command in Indochina, justified by state of war prevailing in the three Associated States of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam has imposed limitations on exercise of authority in military field by governments of these States.

"Insofar as it is concerned, my government sincerely hopes that, in future, reviews, discussions relating to Vietnamese National Army will be subjects of tripartite conferences between United States, France and Vietnam, instead of being dealt with by France in name of Vietnam.

"In addition, in order to prepare for release of French troops and effective guarantee interior and exterior security of country, Government of Vietnam is considering increasing Vietnamese Army to following levels, which must be attained in 1955:

"A—Regular army of 165,000 men forming the fighting arm (Corps de Bataille),

"B—Security forces of 65,000 men, that is to say a total of 230,000 men.

"It is evident that to attain this program of increased military potential, Government of Vietnam is counting on adequate aid from United States, aid which it would prefer to receive directly, as it receives French military aid to Vietnam.

"I would be grateful if you could let me know if point of view outlined above would meet with approval of Government of United States. While extending my sincere appreciation for the attention you may give to this matter, as well as for all steps you may deem worth taking in favor my government, I take this opportunity to reiterate, Mr. Ambassador, assurance of my highest esteem."

CAMERON

751G.00/10–254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the Department of State

SECRET LONDON, October 2, 1954—11 p. m.

1691. Repeated information Paris 243, Saigon 22. From Secretary. At luncheon October 2 Eden raised subject Associated States. He expressed a deep-seated concern over impression he had gained from several members French delegation London Conference that French were divided between inclination support Diem and possibility of deal with Ho. I had arranged to inform British here fully of Smith–LaChambre Washington conversations for which Eden was grateful. He feels we are following right line with French but is particularly concerned over situation in Laos. I gather he is gloomy over prospects holding South Vietnam but is particularly sensitive over developments in Laos which he obviously considered will have repercussions on Burma. Caccia who was present continued display curiosity concerning our intentions providing military aid and particularly to establish MAAG in Cambodia.

ALDRICH

Editorial Note

Ambassador Robert McClintock delivered the following note from President Eisenhower to King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia on October 2, 1954, on the occasion of the presentation by the Ambassador of his credentials:

"Your Majesty:

"The people of the United States have watched with concern and admiration the struggle of Cambodia against unwarranted Communist aggression. The United States is happy that Cambodia has reaffirmed its independence and that your Kingdom is in a position now to undertake a course which will secure that sovereign freedom for which your people fought.

"At this time when Cambodia has so convincingly demonstrated its independence and its stern determination to maintain that independence, I desire Your Majesty to know that my Government will be pleased to consider ways in which our two countries can more effectively cooperate in the joint task of stemming the threats facing your territories and maintaining peace and prosperity in your Kingdom.

"With assurances of my personal esteem and high regard,

"Sincerely, Dwight D. Eisenhower" (Presidential Correspondence, lot 66 D 204)

This message, drafted in the Department of State, was transmitted to the President by Acting Secretary Smith on September 23; for the memorandum of transmittal, see page 2053. Having been approved by the President on September 24, it was sent to Phnom Penh in telegram 74 of September 29. (751H.11/9–2954)

The President's message was published in the Department of State *Bulletin* of October 25, 1954 (page 615), as was a White House announcement, also dated October 2, which reported the presentation by the Ambassador of his credentials and indicated that henceforth

United States budgetary aid for the Cambodian armed forces would be provided directly.

In telegram 136 from Phnom Penh, October 4, McClintock reported that Prime Minister Penn Nouth had expressed gratification over the letter from President Eisenhower to the King, and was highly pleased by a French translation, provided by McClintock, of the White House Press Release of October 2. The Ambassador had told Penn Nouth that the objective of American aid was to maintain Cambodia as a free and sovereign state, and that aid must be compensated by a high standard of performance. (751H.5 MSP/10-454)

751G.00/10-354

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State [1]

SECRET LONDON, October 3, 1954.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MENDES-FRANCE

Re: Indochina

Mendes-France said that he agreed that we should back Diem as Premier. However, he doubted that he had the necessary qualities. Mendes-France admitted however that he saw no one else who did have those qualities. He said he realized that Diem was somewhat anti-French. He did not blame him for this and recognized that any successful leader in Vietnam would have to be somewhat anti-French. What worried him was not this quality, but the apparent lack of administrative qualities and ability to get along with others. He would however give Diem a good try.

He referred to Bao Dai. I mentioned that Heath was on his way to see Bao Dai with a view to getting him also to support Diem. Mendes-France said he felt that Bao Dai was about played out and had little more influence on the situation. He said that Bao Dai could be very largely ignored, except that he was useful from the standpoint of giving "legitimacy" to the Government of Vietnam.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

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[1] This memorandum of conversation was transmitted to Saigon in telegram 1389 of Oct. 4 (also sent to Paris as telegram 1235). (751G.00/10-454)

751G.13/10-454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, October 4, 1954—8 p. m.

1413. Repeated information Saigon 176. From Ambassador Heath. I saw Bao Dai yesterday in Cannes. Presumably because he had been advised of the French-American attitude by Ely's visit to Cannes and my talk after arrival with Nguyen De, Bao Dai expressed no objections to Diem's remaining in office. He agreed thoroughly that Hinh had acted very reprehensibly in opposing Diem's orders and in taking the Army into politics. He asserted that he had told Hinh that he should have obeyed Diem's orders and that if they were unjustified he should then have appealed to him—Bao Dai. De had undoubtedly informed Bao Dai of my objection to his telegrams to Diem and Hinh requesting the Army should be taken into the Government. Bao Dai said that that was a "drafting error". He had not meant that the Army should occupy cabinet positions but that as a necessary measure of appeasement Hinh should be continued as chief of staff. He then went on to say that he had no particular confidence in Xuan's ability or loyalty to him, Bao Dai. He thought he could rely more on Diem's loyalty than on the other candidates for the premiership. At the same time he said that with all his virtue of honesty and sincerity, Diem was not a natural statesman nor overly intelligent. If Diem were to succeed he must change his entourage. I agreed with that statement and said that Diem seemed to have too many brothers advising him.

Comment: I personally believe that at least in the near future Bao Dai will not try to dismiss or even undermine Diem. On the other hand, Bao Dai is surrounded by far from disinterested advisers and is weak. I had dinner last night with Buu Loc and it is very evident to me that he is fairly busy campaigning to succeed Diem. Buu Loc asked me in case Diem failed to make a success of it whom I thought might undertake the succession. I replied that our thinking was concentrated on Diem's successfully presiding [over] a government of national union.

After discussing the political crisis in Vietnam the conversation turned to Bao Dai's possible return to Vietnam. I told Bao Dai quite frankly that he had a very bad press in Vietnam and abroad because of his absenteeism but that might be overcome if on his return he would live fully up to the responsibilities of his office of chief of state, set an example of austerity and patriotism, make frequent public appearances and exhibit a real interest in the welfare of his subjects, maintain frequent warm contacts with officers and civilians of all classes thus promoting national unity and will to resist Communist take-over. I said that I would not venture to suggest whether he should engage in actual business of governing or whether his role should be that of an English monarch but he would have to be active. Bao Dai was evidently far from pleased at my oblique criticism of his past performance. He said he of course wanted to return but that he had to look at the situation realistically. He had to be assured of some organized support should he return. At the present he had only the support of the sects which was insufficient. The loyalty of his army to him was far from certain in its present temper. I remarked that if he did return with will, patriotic determination and activity that he would find support within the country and without. He seemed far from convinced or decided. My personal opinion is that while he may return if Diem or a successor succeeds in bringing some stability and unity to the country, Bao Dai is too set in his ways ever to provide the leadership or example that Vietnam requires.

DILLON

851G.00/10-554 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, October 5, 1954—4 : 17 p. m.
PRIORITY

90. Following sent Saigon as Usfoto 372 repeated herewith for your information:

1. At third meeting La Chambre–Faure–Ely talks held afternoon September 28 Gov. Stassen took following position on French and U.S. Economic Aid Programs for Associated States: (*a*) U.S. and France should deal directly with AS in these programs, (*b*) Each AS should appoint economic aid agency to coordinate all programs; (*c*) Franc grants should be controlled by AS and France, dollar grants be controlled by AS and U.S.; (*d*) Magnitude of program be decided later through consultation all parties. These your guidelines for future discussions with AS and French.

2. Faure specifically agreed to (*a*) above and left other points uncontested. He warned that left to selves Vietnamese might plan grandiose programs not directly geared to winning election. Recommended programs emphasizing relief; resettlement; land reform and rehabilitation of transportation facilities and public utilities. He estimated cost two year program at total 86 billion francs. He stated France budgeting 20 billion francs this program for calendars 1955 and 1956 combined. (Details follow in separate cable). No discussion Franco-American relationships in operational aspects programs. Request Mission recommendations this matter.

3. USOM authorized proceed discuss with AS magnitude and contents program for each State and, pending establishment AS aid agency referred to 1(*b*) above, USOM authorized consult separately with French. Will advise you further how believe AS agencies should operate in future. Meantime request any suggestions you may have.

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[1] Drafted by Frederick H. Bunting, Chief of the Cambodia–Laos–Vietnam Division, Office of Far Eastern Operations, Foreign Operations Administration. Also sent priority to Vientiane as telegram 56.

Request USOM/Saigon, after consultation other parties, submit FOA/W soonest, two year program showing both foreign exchange (expressed in dollars) and local currency requirements, and giving (U.S. fiscal) annual totals for each State and by major activities. Also give brief description contents each field activity. Local currency requirements should reflect expected expenditures; foreign exchange requirements reflect obligations.

DULLES

751G.00/10–754 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Cameron) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, October 7, 1954—noon.

1361. Repeated information priority Paris 461. We have been told by Fishel that Bao Dai has sent second series of telegrams to three generals following his conversations with Ambassador Heath and General Ely. We have not seen texts of messages, nor have we heard of them from any other source, but Chief of State is reported to have instructed Binh Xuyen, General Le Van Vien to cooperate fully with Diem. Telegrams to Hinh and Xuan reportedly instruct them to cease immediately all their activity against Diem government. Fishel tells us that Diem learned of these messages in cable from brother Luyen.

Diem has received this news with satisfaction and his increased confidence and assurance have been remarked by those who have seen him during past 24 hours. We made same observation last night at farewell reception which Diem gave for General Salan.

We have advised Diem via Fishel that in order exploit fully this favorable turn of events he should take no action until after he has had opportunity consult with Ambassador and General Ely and under no circumstances should he assume that these alleged telegrams now automatically give him the whip hand. We hope that President now realizes that he has opportunity, if situation is skillfully handled, of increasing support for his government.

CAMERON

751G.00/10–854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 8, 1954—8 p. m.

1382. Repeated information priority Paris 466. I saw both General Ely and Diem this morning. Ely said that in long interview yesterday Diem had been adamant that Hinh must go and Ely had been equally firm particularly in view of Bao Dai's telegrams, that Diem, as matter of practical necessity, was obliged to retain Hinh at this time as Chief of Staff.

Ely said he was seeing Hinh later in morning and would learn what Hinh's "conditions" were for cooperating with Diem government. I said to Ely it was not up to Hinh to propose any conditions whatsoever. Hinh had acted very badly and he would be fortunate indeed to be retained as Chief Staff in view of his insubordination to government. I said that if Hinh still attempted to impose conditions on formation civil government, I would recommend to Washington we cut off further aid to Vietnamese defense forces until they behaved themselves. I told Ely I thought he should lecture Hinh on way Chief Staff should comport himself toward legal government. Ely said he would talk to him along these lines and suggested I might talk to Hinh later.

I then went to see Diem who for more than hour maintained that Hinh must be dismissed. Diem insisted Hinh would never stop plotting or mismanaging army. He asserted Hinh was increasingly unpopular both with his Vietnamese Officer Corps and troops; that if Hinh stayed Diem's government would lose all face and prestige with country.

I replied I would welcome, as he would, Hinh's departure from scene, but that it was simply not practical at present moment. Diem must face fact he lacks force to compel Hinh to obey his orders. French would not order Hinh back to service with a French army at this time and, if they did, Hinh would refuse to obey orders and go into open rebellion against government, justifying his action on Bao Dai's telegrams directing Diem government to retain him. Diem then said that, if he tried revolution, it would be unsuccessful unless French forces by their inaction permitted him to succeed. I said it would be certain that French, having concluded armistice with Viet Minh, were not going to start another war with Vietnamese army, but would simply remain in their barracks as long as public order, French lives and property were not imperilled. Even if Hinh's forces did not march into city and occupy government buildings, his allies, the Binh Xuyen, since they controlled the police, could quietly paralyze the government. I reminded Diem that on two occasions he had sought reconciliation with Hinh, using Embassy members as intermediaries. I said that if, as matter of practical necessity, which was way I saw situation, he would allow Hinh to remain as Chief Staff, he would be buying time in which to calm present temper of Officer Corps and turn their loyalty to government instead of Hinh. I said that in this breathing spell our own influence on officers Vietnamese army would be exerted to persuade them only future and chance of foreign support was policy of staying out of politics and proper subordination to civil authority.

We argued back and forth for more than hour at end of which time, as I was already overdue for discussion with Wisner of CIA who was leaving Saigon within the hour, I broke off interview. We agreed I would discuss matter later in day.

Following my talk I received report that if Diem failed to retain General Hinh and take Binh Xuyen and General Xuan into Cabinet, army and Binh Xuyen would stage *coup d'état* against government "within 48 hours."

Ely has since sent word to me he hopes I will resume my conversation with Diem and see Hinh as soon as possible as he also is concerned that time is running short.

I intend to tell Diem that while both France and US support his government this support is not translatable into terms of force on the local scene and without force he cannot compel Hinh to leave at this time. It would seem therefore it would be necessary for time being to leave Hinh as Chief Staff. Any prolongation of this deadlock could have only dangerous consequences for Diem Government and free Vietnam.

HEATH

751J.00/10–854 : Telegram

The Chargé in Laos (Rives) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, October 8, 1954—10 p. m.

55. Repeated information Saigon 92, Phnom Penh 5, Bangkok 14, Paris 31. From Yost.[1] Department's telegram 55.[2] Lao leaders face three primary tasks: (1) set up strong united government unafraid of present dangers, (2) establish government's authority throughout country and take vigorous action against subversion, (3) to meet immediate economic needs of people and commence at once gradual improvement their condition.

First task complicated by dearth of political personalities but simplified by absence basic differences of doctrine among them. As far as I can judge, present Prime Minister is ablest, strongest and most knowledgeable among Lao leaders. On other hand, he is handicapped by relationship and fraternal feeling toward two dangerous brothers, by blame for Lao acceptance of unfavorable Geneva settlement, and by over optimistic belief in reconcilation with Pathet Laos. He will probably have to go, at least temporarily. Unfortunately three alternative candidates are far from ideal, though all appear thoroughly sound on Communist question. Phoui Sannanikone is badly shaken by recent assassination,[3] though convincing reassurance from Thai side might restore his nerve. Prince Boun Oum, while upright and firm is not bright, has little political following and is regarded as French instrument. (Of course French desire to substitute Boun Oum for present Prime Minister, who resents their pressure at Geneva, is not entirely disinterested.) Katay Sasorith is ablest after Souvanna Phouma but has reputation of dabbling in corruption and might be difficult keep in line. Yet any new government will have to be based on these three. Reassuring fact is that Crown Prince will in any case play major role and that he is able, vigorous and sincere. On the whole I feel that, while too much should not be expected of new Lao Government, acceptable constellation will be worked out during next month which, with considerable prodding from French and ourselves, will take necessary action.

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[1] Minister Yost did not present his credentials until Nov. 1.

[2] Telegram 55 to Vientiane, Oct. 5, requesting Yost's estimate of the situation in Laos, is not printed. (751J.00/10–254)

In order for new government to expel Viet Minh and reestablish its authority in northern province, (1) its anxiety re Thailand supported acts of terrorism must be relieved and (2) it must have more energetic and effective backing from international commission. We are pleased by attitude new Canadian Ambassador and believe he can bring his Indian colleague along in protesting gross and clearly established violations Geneva agreement. If Western powers take up and publicize such protests, I believe gross violations can be checked. It is too early to say whether Pathet Lao can be expelled from or driven underground in two northern provinces but I consider prospects fair if objective pursued vigorously. Public opinion in remainder of country should not, after withdrawal Viet Minh, prove too serious in immediate future, assuming US continues its budgetary and logistic support Lao armed forces.

Possibility of meeting third task successfully depends very largely on material and technical help US, France and others will supply. Amounts are relatively small and economic improvement required keep people contented and immune from subversion is slight.

Most immediate measures US could take to reinforce Lao security are following: (1) persuade Thai Government cease at once all subversion in Laos and support of Lao exiles; (2) supply promptly helicopters to assist international commission in establishing Communist violation truce agreement; (3) exert strong pressure on Lao Government and commission to carry out agreement and reestablish royal authority northern provinces; (4) prepare to implement, commencing close of rainy season at end this month, modest but fast moving program of economic aid, emphasizing food, health and transport.

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[3] The Legation had reported in telegram 35 of Sept. 19 that Laotian Defense Minister Kou Oravong had been assassinated by unknown terrorists. (751J.00/9–1954) It was further reported in telegram 49 of Oct. 3 that according to French and Laotian authorities, agents of Prince Petsarath, brother of Souvanna Phouma and a former Laotian Prime Minister in exile in Thailand, were apparently responsible for the assassination. (751J.00/10–354)

RIVES

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 361

Summary Minute of a Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State, October 8, 1954, 10:30 a. m.[1]

TOP SECRET

Subject: Report on Franco-American Talks on Indochina

Participants: The Secretary of State
Mr. Murphy
Mr. Robertson
Mr. MacArthur
Mr. Bowie
Mr. Nolting
Mr. Barbour
Mr. Kidder
Mr. Galloway
Mr. Young
Mr. Dale Fisher
Mr. Hoey
[Mr. Selby]

Support to Diem Government

Mr. Young opened the meeting with a brief review of the bilateral talks stating that the delegations had reached accord on the principle of supporting Diem (the Minute of Understanding) and on the tactics to be followed in the immediate future (the agreed instructions to Saigon). The implementation was now up to the Saigon missions. No information had been received from Saigon in the last forty-eight hours, but it was understood that Diem was stalling "the generals" pending the return of Ely and Heath. The latter have stated their belief that strong talk by Ely can resolve the situation by returning the generals to their tasks. A crucial aspect of the problem would be assuring implementation of the agreement by middle level French officials in Paris and Saigon. The length of time during which joint support was to be extended to Diem had not been specified.

Bao Dai Status

During the talks the French had particularly pressed us for agreement to get rid of Bao Dai. Mr. Young remarked that we had recognized this problem but reserved our position as to any immediate action.

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[1] Drafted by Selby of S/S–RO. Circulated as document ELaC Memo 20.

The Secretary referred to his meeting the previous day with British High Commissioner Sir Malcolm MacDonald during which the latter had expressed high regard for Bao Dai, an esteem which only MacDonald holds as far as the Secretary knew. Mr. Robertson noted that ex-Ambassador Bullitt held a similar view.

Coordination of Aid Programs

Mr. Young stated that a major unresolved problem is the nature of joint U.S.-French arrangements with respect to aid programs. La Chambre had envisaged bilateral preparation of aid programs which would then be "presented" to the Associated States Governments. Mr. Robertson said that there was considerable doubt that the French had really accepted our position on informal tripartite coordination. Mr. MacArthur noted that the French had, in pushing the joint idea, stressed aid projects with an immediate political impact.

Elections in 1956

The Secretary asked what our policy on the 1956 elections was. He noted that there was no possibility of fair elections in the North and that, when the time came, we would have ample grounds for postponing or declining to hold them in the South. The problem is not one of getting ready for a political election but combating subversion and infiltration in the immediate future. He felt that we should not use the election as target dates for our aid programs.

Mr. Kidder noted that the election date could serve as a lever for compelling action by the French and the Vietnamese. Mr. MacArthur stated the question of holding elections highlighted the desirability of documenting truce violations. Mr. Young added that to date we have received a great deal of unevaluated material on violations from local governments and the Canadians as well as from our own missions. He pointed out that during the talks with the French both sides had expressed doubt that the elections would or should be held in Vietnam.

Size of Economic Aid Program

Mr. Young stated that the OCB had asked the Working Group to prepare recommendations and instructions on the size of the proposed economic and military aid programs, the machinery and methods for their implementation. The FOA had in mind about a $100 million program, 35 for refugees and 65 for economic assistance. Provisional planning was under way but political guidance was needed.

Mr. Young indicated that the main problem to date is that the Defense Department has been "unenamored" with Vietnam. It stresses the need for political stability as a condition precedent to adding a training mission to MAAG Saigon, and is giving the program a low priority on its military support agenda. Mr. Murphy said his talks with Defense officials gave him the same impression. We have pointed out the connection between political stability and minimum military security for the Vietnam National Government. It was noted that at present the top ranks of the Vietnamese National Army are overwhelmingly French.

Mr. Robertson stated that one objection posed by Defense is the lack of sufficient military personnel for completing the program envisaged prior to the target date (mid '56). Defense envisages the need for 1500 officers compared to the present Saigon complement, additions to which are probably precluded by the Geneva Agreement.

Mr. Young noted that the National Army would utilize the FEC stocks of military gear but, over and above this, the JCS estimate an annual cost of about $550 million for the armed forces of Vietnam and Cambodia.

The Secretary expressed doubt that this was the most effective way to spend a half billion dollars. Mr. Nolting noted that this was a total non-equipment cost figure and that the French and the Vietnamese would doubtless contribute a portion.

The Secretary posed the question of the mission of the National Army. Mr. Young stated that our original request had given the JCS the opportunity for a two-fold answer (1) an army to defend against a Vietminh attack not supported by Chinese forces and (2) sufficient forces for maintaining internal security. The Secretary stated his view that there was no point in preparing the Vietnamese army as the means for defense against a fullfledged attack since this situation would bring the Manila Pact into play.

Mr. MacArthur stated that conversations with Colonel Rossen suggested that the force goal was the replacement of the French forces now in Vietnam. Mr. Galloway added that military strength necessary to hold a beachhead had also been mentioned. The Secretary indicated his rejection of the idea of the Vietnamese National Army as an important force in a general SEA war. Its mission should be psychological in order to give the people the assurance of internal security and the government a sense of stability. A 250,000 man army seemed far too expensive, for it was not an all or nothing proposition and a force of fifty thousand might accomplish the same purpose.

Mr. MacArthur added that, with respect to creating confidence, there were now 180,000 Vietnamese in uniforms and to reduce significantly their number might set in motion an unfavorable political reaction. The Secretary noted the need to educate people to the fact that individual military power within a collective group need not be so large as the requirements of a nation acting alone. We could not press the Defense Department to contribute sums in the measure of a half billion dollars to a project such as this enjoying but one chance in three of success and where the sum did not bring an appreciable improvement of the odds above a smaller contribution.

Answering the Secretary's query, Mr. Young stated that the half billion dollar figure had apparently originated with MAAG Saigon, which envisaged a ten-division army trained for an offensive mission; this in contrast to the defensive strategy of the French. The Secretary stated that he had thought in terms of a police force rather than an army.

Answering Mr. Robertson's question as to how the Manila Pact would actually be applied in case of overt aggression, the Secretary stated that, in case of an all-out Vietminh attack, he foresaw American bombing of Tonkin and probably general war with China. Our concept envisages a fight with nuclear weapons rather than the commitment of ground forces.

The Secretary stated that the military plan under discussion was one having no significance in case of a general war but must be judged on the basis of its political and psychological value. We could not recommend overriding JCS recommendations on military grounds but where the primary purpose of the Force was to defend against political subversion it would be a matter for State Department guidance.

Mr. Young suggested that what was required was our specifically outlining our goals to Defense. Mr. Nolting stated that a prior experiment in covertly training Indonesian officials in FBI techniques had been successful. Mr. Young suggested that the problem of training and force goals should be handled by separate letters to Defense and asked the Secretary how he wished the Department to proceed. The Secretary instructed that his views be incorporated in a single letter. He stated his present view that we should not ask for the creation of a ten-division army, adding that his views might be somewhat changed after lunch today with Senator Mansfield.

Pathet Lao Forces

Mr. Young noted that a further problem was the continued presence of "Free Lao" forces in the mountain country of East Laos.

MAAG in Cambodia

Mr. Young stated that the French had indicated during the talks that the establishment of a US MAAG in Phnom Penh was not inconsistent with their plans but they preferred a joint undertaking.

The Secretary noted the possibility that the British had promised Chou en-Lai that they would oppose this move as a violation of the spirit of Geneva. Mr. MacArthur expressed doubt we really had the agreement of the French.

751G.00/10–954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 9, 1954—4 p. m.

1387. Repeated information priority Paris 467. Reference Embassy telegram 1382, repeated Paris 466.[1] I saw Diem again yesterday evening and found him still adamant on proposition that General Hinh must leave his position as Chief Staff and Vietnam. I said to Diem that, while his government has support of both France and US, this obviously did not mean that either country could put force at his disposal to protect his regime against organized internal opposition. I remarked he evidently did not believe Hinh would actually endeavor to overthrow his regime by force and also believed that if he did, coup would be unsuccessful. On contrary on basis of my information, I believed Hinh was quite capable of both undertaking and promptly succeeding in *coup de force* and would act if Diem failed to meet "request" of Bao Dai to take Xuan and Binh Xuyen into government. I told him to disregard Bao Dai's telegram saying army should participate in government because Bao Dai had very specifically assured me that was drafting error and he did not contemplate army as such would hold office in civil ministries. I inquired whether he had been negotiating with Xuan and Binh Xuyen. He replied he had not; he was waiting settlement of Hinh issue. I earnestly advised him to call in Xuan and Binh Xuyen and offer them posts he had already indicated they might have. If he delayed further, they would take line he had disobeyed Bao Dai and either agitate for removal of Diem government or more probably proceed to *coup d'état.* If they raised question of Hinh's demands, they could be told Bao Dai had made it very clear he did not support army's participation in civil government. I told Diem, as I had told him earlier in day, that by leaving Hinh as Chief Staff he would have time either to bring Hinh back to loyalty to civil government or if he continued this course to convince Vietnamese Officer Corps that Hinh was following course fatal to future of National Army. Hinh could be gotten rid of later but by pressing issue now when President had no force behind him Hinh would almost certainly be victor. All this seemed make little impression on Diem. He remained mutely obstinate that Hinh must go now.

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[1] Dated Oct. 8, p. 2118.

Dr. Fishel came to see me this morning and said Diem would not press for Hinh's dismissal now, although he remained firm in his conviction that Hinh must go—eventually. Fishel said also President was getting in touch immediately with Xuan and Bay Vien of Binh Xuyen. I urged Fishel to persuade Diem to lose no time in concluding his negotiations with Xuan and Bay Vien.

I saw Ely at noon today who urged me to see both Diem and Hinh without delay. Ely said, according to his information, plot between Binh Xuyen and Hinh to surround palace and take Diem prisoner was already far advanced. He said Xuan, Hinh, and Bay Vien had sent telegrams to Bao Dai urging him to dismiss Diem on grounds Diem had failed to obey Bao Dai's instructions to take Xuan and Binh Xuyen into government. Ely said he felt desperately pessimistic about situation.

His own position vis-à-vis Expeditionary Corps and French community Vietnam was extremely bad. He was accused of having "sold out to Americans" at Washington meetings by widely repeated story of American correspondent that he, Ely, preferred having "nationalist and anti-French Government in Vietnam" to a "pro-French Government" was being used against him in Saigon and in Paris. He had found it necessary to call in officers of French Expeditionary Corps and insist there had been no sacrifice of French interests in Vietnam and he had issued press statement to that effect this morning.

Message unsigned

751G.00/10–954 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State

OFFICIAL USE ONLY PRIORITY HANOI, October 9, 1954—4 p. m.

274. Sent Saigon 360, Paris 86. Saigon pass information USIA. Viet Minh military began entering Hanoi in force this morning simultaneously with French withdrawal. Estimate bulk of French forces will be over Doumer Bridge by late afternoon. Streets adjacent Consulate patrolled by Viet Minh. Viet Minh flags flying throughout city. Loudspeaker trucks announcing orders to troops for proper conduct towards population within earshot Consulate. Troops occupied former office and residence Governor North Vietnam at eleven hours. Occupation city proper expected be complete by midnight with troops moving to edge perimeter tomorrow. Only few minor incidents so far. Sainteny arrived last night. Consulate not yet con-

tacted by Viet Minh. Occupation appears well-organized with officials promptly posting instructions to populace.[1]

CORCORAN

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[1] In telegram 276 from Hanoi, Oct. 9, Maj. John D. McGowan, Assistant Army Attaché in Vietnam, reported the following:

"Change-over orderly and efficient with no incidents. Viet Minh units began moving into Hanoi at dawn. Despite all day curfew prescribed by French Command, local population out en masse along streets by early morning, cheering enthusiastically at appearance each Viet Minh troop echelon. Red flags line streets, going up rapidly over Government buildings. Simple ceremony under marquee of Metropole Hotel, participated in by members ICC, Viet Minh, marked entrance Viet Minh into Palais du Gouvernement du Nord Vietnam (seat of government of North Vietnam). Viet Minh flag hoisted over Palais du Gouvernement at 1100 hours.

"No restrictions on movements noted throughout morning. Free circulation among Viet Minh Army units. Soldiers posed for numerous photographs. Viet Minh officer queried stated all elements in today's occupation are from Regiment 102. Division 308 now named the 'Capital Division'. By noon guard details posted all Government buildings and other important installations, including US Consulate, in Viet Minh sector and wire details out laying lines. Viet Minh troops appear confident, well-disciplined, presented excellent appearance. Majority very young." (751G.00/10–954)

Corcoran submitted the following additional information in telegram 278 from Hanoi, Oct. 10:

"Holiday atmosphere prevails today in Hanoi with large crowds in streets and numerous organized processions and demonstrations of school children and other groups. Control Commission personnel and journalists circulate freely throughout city. Large numbers troops and police posted throughout city and efficiently directing traffic with standard international signals. City is plastered with Viet Minh flags and slogans. Commission members said this morning they had heard of no untoward incidents so far. Noisy cheering and singing demonstrations started as early as 8 o'clock this morning particularly at Imperial Palace and in park adjacent former headquarters Governor of North Vietnam. General impression is of enthusiastic popular participation plus high degree of organization and direction these manifestations." (751G.00/10–1054)

751G./10–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, October 10, 1954—3 p. m.

1397. Repeated information Paris 469. Embassy telegram 1387, October 9. General Hinh came to see me last evening at my request. He was ill at ease, undoubtedly because his conscience is in same condition. He tried, however, to carry it off with a jaunty manner.

He took initiative in discussion and asked me what I thought of government and whether Diem was going to reform it. I told him I thought it far from ideal, but since as matter of practical necessity Diem had had to give certain cabinet posts to Cao Daists and Hoa Haos, whose candidates were not impressive, I understood Diem would negotiate with Vien and General Xuan and would offer them posts. I said both the latter would doubtless ask greater representation than they probably were entitled to, but neither could at this time expect to have vital positions in government. Xuan had entered government first accepting post and then resigning forthwith, afterwards applying again for vice presidency, all this accompanied by critical public statements against government. Le Vien had undoubtedly many good qualities but he would have to dissociate himself from gambling monopoly and other unpleasant interests before he could occupy greater position in public life. I added I understood he was willing to get rid of these connections. As for Army's demands, I told him that Bao Dai had made unmistakably clear to me that his telegram did not contemplate Army as such participating in civil government and that was very decidedly our view. Hinh protested that that was also his view, but with paucity of people in Vietnam, President should use his officers as Secretaries of State in Ministries of Defense and Youth. He had particularly brilliant candidate for Youth Ministry. I said certainly there would be no harm in suggesting to President that he use such officer but I did not believe Army should have Secretary of State in Defense unless it were impossible to find suitable civilian candidate. It was very important to maintain separation of civil and military. I went on to say while government was far from ideal, with Diem and other good men in civil branch and with Hinh in military, government could successfully attack tremendous problems facing it. I said General O'Daniel and myself thought Army should take lead in work of pacification. Hinh said he had offered plan of pacification to government but no attention had been paid to it.

(*Comment:* I do not believe he has prepared any detailed plan).

He said he would be glad to show it to me and I said we would be glad to see it, and insofar as possible, would detail some MAAG officers to help him on it if he wished, and if funds were a problem, would consider giving aid.

I reminded Hinh, giving him figures, that bulk of Vietnamese defense budget was defrayed by US. Hitherto this passed through French, but we would probably shortly negotiate new arrangement for direct aid. Very likely amounts previously given would be reduced, but there would still be enough to maintain adequate army. I went on to say that in more than four years here I had never interfered in internal political matters and would not call my activities for past few weeks intervention, but with the deep political divisions and unrest which had increased in last few weeks, it had been necessary for US and France to mediate. This internal strife must come to end now if Vietnam were to survive. I felt he could be sure Diem would treat Army properly and French and US would certainly use their friendly influence to see Army is not hindered in its task. He could be sure of our support if Army did its own job and stayed out of politics. Hinh said he had no desire to get into politics and if government got on with work and reorganization, he would be glad to take a vacation in France. I replied there was no question of his taking vacation at this time. He had job to do.

Hinh then indulged in some criticism of Diem to which I replied that Diem had his faults as everyone had, but it should be very obvious to Hinh that there was no capable successor in sight at this moment. Hinh did not dispute that. He then criticized General Phuong of the Cao Dais and General Soai of Hoa Haos as being dishonest, untrustworthy and incapable, and said Le Vien, in spite of his reputation, was man of his word and of ability. I remarked I would not dispute any of those statements, but could hardly expect Diem, after painfully forming a new government, to throw out the Cao Dais and Hoa Haos at this moment.

Our talk closed with Hinh's saying he and his friends would observe Diem for another forty-eight hours, but if Diem failed to comply with Bao Dai's request to enlarge his government, Army would have to act. Hinh said in effect he had supported government because Army had power to turn it out of office. He had resisted great pressure of many interests who were urging the Army to overthrow government, and unless government really got to work, Army could not stand by. I said I had no doubt government would tackle its problems now, but that any *coup de force* by Army would be fatal to future of Army of Vietnam. It would be disastrous for Hinh personally.

Foregoing is a fairly complete account of our conversation. I omitted number of wild and I would say childish statements by Hinh. After this talk I am more than ever convinced he must be gotten out of picture. Unfortunately this cannot happen now. I believe talk may have postponed, but not avoided Hinh's revolutionary intentions.[1]

HEATH

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[1] In telegram 1401 from Saigon, Oct. 10, Heath further reported that Hinh's agents had abducted an officer of Diem's palace guard and that Vietnamese Army armored cars had circled the palace grounds, menacing the guard force. Heath informed General Ely of these developments. Ely urged that the Binh Xuyen be given the Interior Ministry, but Heath replied that the time had come to stand firm against threats. Diem must be provided with a program for restoring internal security, a program which had to be forced upon all concerned, including Diem. (751G.00/10–1054)

The Department replied immediately. Telegram 1485 to Saigon, Oct. 10, read as follows: "Concur lines your approach. Clear that resolution political conflict and prevention any overthrow of Diem by force will depend a lot on ability and intention La Chambre with Ely, despite difficulties, take decisive and conclusive measures in line Washington understandings and instructions re supporting broadened Diem government and preventing Hinh extend his control over civil government. Coincidence any *coup d'état* with La Chambre visit could hardly escape provoking unfavorable reaction various quarters." (751G.00/10–1054)

751G.00/10-1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 11, 1954—11 a. m.

1405. Repeated information priority Paris 471. Situation has become exceedingly critical in Saigon during past few hours. Following are among swift-moving events leading up to present:

1) General Le Van Vien refused to meet with President as he had previously agreed to do 3 p. m., October 10.

2) General Ely called in Bay Vien and urged moderation upon him. Bay Vien replied he would not participate in Government unless given Interior Ministry but under Ely's urging agreed he would not participate in coup against Government which he had allegedly undertaken to bring about by 11 a. m., October 11. Instead he would "remain neutral".

3) President saw General Xuan, attempting to deal separately with him. Xuan remained adamant, insisting he, General Hinh, and General Le Van Vien must be treated together, not separately, and that their demands must be met *in toto*.

4) General Ely sent word to Diem offering President protection French armor and troops. President refused offer at that time.

5) At dinner given by President last night for La Chambre at which Hinh present, Hinh was "very excited" according to Foreign Minister Do. He informed Do he had "waited 50 days" for President to take action, President had refused obey directives Bao Dai, Hinh knew of Bay Vien's statement he would "remain neutral" and of his agreement meet with President 10 a. m. this morning, and further knew of Ely's offer two armored cars with French forces for protection President. Hinh stated firmly he would not be deterred by French action or by lack cooperation Bay Vien. He was determined "take action" against Government morning October 11.

Foreign Minister Do was in despair at state which had been reached and was convinced that Hinh, under influence fiery young officers his staff, would move against Government.

We believe it highly possible Hinh will carry out his threat and lead revolt against Government, if not within next few hours, then in very near future.

Diem is meeting this morning at 10 a. m. with Bay Vien in effort obtain cooperation Binh Xuyen but with very little prospect of success.

Offer two armored cars and troops for protection President in his Palace was accepted last night by Defense State Secretary Minh but Daridan reportedly told him French would not send cars last night as coup was "not imminent" during night.

HEATH

751G.00/10–1154 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL HANOI, October 11, 1954—11 a. m.

280. Sent Saigon 366, Paris 91. Elaborate parade marked entry additional Viet Minh troops Hanoi Sunday morning.[1] Marching infantry, Russian trucks, machine guns and light artillery received warm welcome from large crowds. Troops carried flowers presented by populace and "cheer leaders" or agitators in ranks and among spectators kept applause and cheers going. Press and newsreel photographers including Americans and at least one obvious Russian actively covered the events as did members Control Commission. Physical condition, discipline and military appearance troops seemed good. Some details of interest to USARMA follow in separate telegram.

Gatherings and processions with Viet Minh flags and banderoles were observed throughout the city during the afternoon. Construction of elaborate triumphal arches in center of town near railway crossing caused speculation probable grand entry by Ho Chi Minh and Giap. Most Diem slogans posted on walls had been painted out by afternoon. On boulevard Hai Ba Trung not far from Consulate, a Viet Minh English language slogan read "people of Vietnam unite with people of world for peace". Most popular Viet Minh slogan of day appeared to be "long live President Ho Chi Minh" which appeared on signs all over town. Most common shout from claques among spectators was "welcome" with an occasional "doc lap" or "independence".

CORCORAN

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[1] Oct. 10.

751G.5 MSP/10–1154

The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] October 11, 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: With reference to the enclosures from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in your letter of September 28, there are several important political and policy aspects of both the manpower and cost estimates of force goals for the Associated States totalling about $536,400,000, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff reservations on the support and training of Vietnamese forces.

With respect to the magnitude of force levels and costs for Viet-Nam and Cambodia, I believe that United States policy should be based on NSC 5429/2,[2] which envisages the maintenance in Indochina of forces necessary to assure the internal security of the area, and upon the arrangements concluded at Manila to deter aggression in Southeast Asia. The concepts underlying the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty should make the maintenance of relatively large ground forces unnecessary in the Associated States, since the military establishment of a single state within such a collective security group need not be so large as would be required if that nation had to act alone to defend its security against external aggression. It seems to me that the mission of the Vietnamese National Armed Forces should be to provide internal security. The manpower and cost estimates in the JCS attachment would seem to be excessive in the above context.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA.

[2] For NSC 5429/2, "Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East," Aug. 20, 1954, see volume XII.

From the political viewpoint some armed forces are necessary. If adequately trained and equipped they would give the people of free Viet-Nam some assurance of internal security and provide the Government of Free Viet-Nam with an increased sense of stability. This would produce definite political and psychological advantages and would help fulfill the objectives of NSC 5429/2. I would appreciate having your views as to the forces we should contemplate to carry out this policy as well as the amount of funds we should devote to this purpose.

With respect to the question of U.S. support and training for the Vietnamese forces there are two political aspects: purpose and timing. Effective execution of NSC policy on U.S. support for such forces can have a significant bearing on the political objective of creating a stable, capable anti-Communist government in Viet-Nam, and on assisting it in carrying out a vigorous internal program with Congressional approval. One effective way to strengthen the Vietnamese Government is to assist in the reorganizing and training of its armed forces, as I noted in my letter to you of August 18, 1954. This point was again referred in the Acting Secretary's letter of September 7, 1954, to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. In addition to budgetary support, a direct means of helping to create and maintain political stability will be by appropriate participation of the U.S. MAAG in the planning, developing and training of Vietnamese security forces. The Department of State is aware of the risks, difficulties and impediments in any such program of U.S. training and assistance for Vietnamese forces. Nevertheless, within these difficulties and limitations, I feel there are many reasons to consider a vigorous, imaginative and effective program for planning, developing and training Vietnamese security forces both in Viet-Nam and perhaps even in nearby countries or in the United States itself. We could substantially influence the development of political, as well as military stability in free Viet-Nam if we had such a training project with Vietnamese forces. The provision of direct budgetary support to those forces would have far less impact if the United States eschews any participation in training those forces.

Then there is the question of timing regarding the degree of political stability which the Joint Chiefs of Staff raised in their memorandum of September 22, 1954.[3] I believe that potential political developments now warrant your consideration of the necessary preliminary steps for working out an appropriate U.S. training function for Vietnamese security forces.

With respect to these considerations regarding force goals and training in Viet-Nam, we need to take some decisions promptly to enable us to respond to the Cambodian, Vietnamese and French Governments concerning financial and other support for their forces in Indochina.

The President has signed a letter to the Prime Minister of Viet-Nam authorizing the American Ambassador to Viet-Nam to examine with him an intelligent program of direct American aid to assist Viet-Nam.[4] A similar letter has already been delivered to the King of Cambodia.[5] In the meantime the Vietnamese Government has submitted a note to this Government stating that it is considering increasing the Vietnamese army to a total force of 230,000 men in order to "guarantee the internal and external security of the country" and requesting United States assistance in this endeavor.[6] The French Finance Minister in his recent talks in Washington expressed a desire for U.S. financial support for the French Expeditionary Corps in Indochina, which the French contemplate retaining at an average strength of about 150,000 men during 1955. The United States representatives indicated that we would strive to give some indication to the French Government of our thinking on these matters by December 1, 1954. The plans of the French and the Vietnamese both seem to me to be beyond what the United States should consider feasible to support for maintaining the security of Free Indochina at this time.

In view of the political considerations and the requirements of timing, it is imperative that the United States Government prepare a firm position on the size of the forces we consider a minimum level to assure the internal security of Indochina. This position will also have to include the amounts of money we will be prepared to make available for this purpose, and the steps we will be willing to take to assist in the training and formation of these forces. It seems to me that we cannot realistically enter into discussions with the other governments concerned until we have made this determination. I would therefore also appreciate your views on how best we should proceed in making this determination.

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[3] See Enclosure 2 to the letter from Secretary Wilson to Secretary Dulles, Sept. 28, p. 2089.

[4] For President Eisenhower's letter to President Diem, Oct. 23, see p. 2166.

[5] For President Eisenhower's letter to King Norodom Sihanouk, Oct. 2, see editorial note, p. 2114.

[6] The note was transmitted in telegram 1310 from Saigon, Oct. 2, p. 2113.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Governor Stassen.

Sincerely yours, JOHN FOSTER DULLES

751G.00/10-1254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, October 12, 1954—6 p. m.

153. Repeated information Saigon 181, Paris 114, Bangkok, Vientiane unnumbered. This morning Defense Minister Ngo Hou told me he had positive intelligence that numerous Viet Minh elements had crossed border from Cambodia into Vietnam without formal rendition to International Control Commission. He said most serious aspect of this movement was not departure of Viet Minh troops from Cambodian soil which could only be welcomed, but fact Viet Minh had taken with them Cambodian cadres for further indoctrination and training in Vietnam. Minister expressed fear that at given moment these Communist Cambodians would be returned to this Kingdom to conduct subversive activities. He added that, given chaotic conditions now prevailing in Cochin China, it would be possible for Viet Minh to utilize this area as a war base for future operations.

Despite this threat Minister expressed confidence Cambodia's ability to defend itself with army mounting guard over frontiers and surface defense (civil defense force) maintaining internal security. This would, however, require outside aid, particularly in matériel, and Colonel Ngo Hou warmly welcomed decision of US Government to extend direct aid.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/10-1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 13, 1954—8 p. m.

1434. Repeated information priority Paris 477. I saw Ely in company with Daridan this morning and conveyed substance of Department's 1502 and 1516, October 12.[2]

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] In telegram 1502, the Department of State stated that the presence of La Chambre in Saigon appeared to give the French the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to take necessary action to neutralize Hinh. In telegram 1516, Heath was instructed to seek the active support of La Chambre in this regard. Washington was disturbed by La Chambre's apparent failure to act. (751G.00/10-1254)

Ely defended himself and LaChambre against suggestions that they had failed to exert maximum efforts in behalf of Diem and to effect neutralization of Hinh. Re first point LaChambre and I both talked jointly with Diem the other night, a fact which in rush of events I failed to report. LaChambre in my presence strongly assured Diem of support but tactfully recommended that Diem solve his conflict with army by taking Xuan into his cabinet, a proposition with which I did not disagree. Ely insisted and truthfully, I believe, that he had gone to utmost to warn and dissuade Hinh from action versus the government. He said that although he offered to post French troops around Palace, an offer which Diem had refused, he could not expose French Expeditionary Force to a clash with Vietnamese National Army. There were thousands of French officers and non-commissioners still serving in Vietnamese National Army and in certain units French officers and non-commissioners had barricaded themselves at night because of the growing feeling in the Vietnamese Army that French were supporting Diem against interests of that army. I told Ely that I would not ask him to go to war with the Vietnamese Army but I felt fairly confident that if he and I saw Hinh together and possibly also officers from the latters staff in order make clear our firm joint position, there would be no *coup d'état*.

Ely had originally planned to see Hinh at 1230 and have me drop in about 1 o'clock. His reason for seeing Hinh alone first was that as Commander-in-Chief of Vietnamese Army he was going to order him not to bring additional battalions into Saigon. Such orders should not, he felt, be delivered in the presence of a third party. I said I must insist that we see Hinh together as separate interviews might leave room for misunderstanding and give Hinh opportunity maneuver between us.

Ely agreed to this without further objections. Hinh, arriving at this time, was received by both of us in Daridan's presence. Ely seemed a little slow in taking off so I told Hinh that due to failure of various factions in free Vietnam to achieve unity in moment of grave national peril, there was growing opinion in Washington that it would be useless to spend any more money or effort in Vietnam and that it would be better to concentrate our financial help in those countries which would make good use of it. I said I could appreciate impatience some of his officers over small result to date in controlling Communist infiltration. However, if a military *coup d'état* occurred, the feeling abroad that it would be useless to give further assistance to Vietnam would dangerously increase. I must warn him as a friend of his, of the National Army and of Vietnam of the dangerous consequences of a *coup d'état*. Hinh practically interrupted me and Ely here to say, "if I understand you, you want to know whether the army is planning a *coup d'état.* The answer is no, we have not planned to overthrow the government and we are not planning to do so. I will make one reservation to that statement. If the government fails to act against communism and we are on the eve of a Communist takeover, then the army will act since it cannot wait until it is too late."

After this unexpected statement, conversation dropped a moment and Ely and I brought up question of army's insistence on participation in the government. I said feeling was very strong in US and in other countries of free world that army as such should not participate in government and insistence upon such participations would be used by opponents of further aid to Vietnam. Hinh said he agreed that under normal circumstances army should not be in government. However, circumstances were not normal. Here were leaders and representatives of the sects with their private armies occupying government posts. The leaders of the sects have been given places in a National Defense Council and were already calling for army records and mixing into purely army business. President without consulting him had, he had heard this morning, promoted a colonel to general's rank and another officer to grade of colonel. In the army, recommendations for promotion were made only after examination of officers record by promotion board. Such a board had recently recommended and Hinh had concurred in promotion of an officer whom he had previously reprimanded for having spent too much time "making propaganda" for Diem. Hinh said he had concurred in promotion since officer was competent and as far as purely military service was concerned had good record. Ely and I both agreed promotions should not be made by Defense Ministry without consultation with Army Command and both said we would be glad to speak to Diem on the matter. As regards National Defense Council, I remarked that I had been assured that this was an essentially honorific council whose recommendations had no binding power over army administration, since army was not represented. Hinh said in view of Diem's propensity for promoting officers without consultation with army staff and purely on basis of officers loyalty to Diem as against army, he felt it necessary to have Xuan as Vice President and Minister of Defense. Xuan, a former general officer, could be relied upon to protect legitimate interests of army. Both Ely and I then asked whether army had any objections against Minh, Assistant Minister of Defense. Hinh said he had no personal objections to Minh but Minh was now acting merely as an intermediary for Diem with no independent powers of his own. The suggestion was made by Ely and myself that if Xuan were acceptable as Defense Minister, Minh might continue as Deputy Minister. Hinh hesitated for a moment and said there would be no objection to such a set-up. I remarked that my understanding was that one of Bay Vien's conditions for coming into Cabinet was that Xuan was to receive a pat on back but no position in government. Hinh said that he was astonished to hear this; he had talked to Bay Vien less than an hour before and latter had assured him that he stood with Hinh for appointment of Xuan as Vice President and Minister of Defense. Ely then said he would like to see Diem with me and discuss some of the points that had come up in the conversation, and the interview ended.

I am told by Fishel that Bay Vien had made as a condition to his entering and supporting the government that Xuan be dropped but had not planned to inform Hinh of that fact until he was assured that Hinh would not insist on army representation in Cabinet.

If we are to believe Hinh, as I am inclined to do, danger of a military *coup d'état* has been averted, at least for time being. The fact that Ely and I together both emphatically warned him of consequences of such an act evidently made an impression, a disagreeable impression, on Hinh.

Diem Government is still not out of danger. Army–Diem conflict may be stirred up again by Diem's intransigent dislike of burying the hatchet against anyone he feels is morally in the wrong and disloyal. Diem's political ineptitude may again stall government and get him into trouble. This morning I learned that his brother, Nhu, had persuaded him that only way out of difficulty was for Diem to go personally to see Bao Dai in Cannes and convince Chief of State to instruct Hinh formally that army was not to participate in government. I sent back word to Diem that his departure at this time might be fatal. It would be regarded as victory for the army and would shake further the shaking loyalty of his old followers. This afternoon Diem decided to cancel his trip and to telegraph Bao Dai instead.

Diem has decided to take Quat into Cabinet as Vice President, if the Sects agree, and in any case to appoint him Minister in charge of government reform and formation of a National Assembly. His principal reason according to Fishel for naming Quat is that Diem feels himself incapable of conducting political negotiations with the Sects and other political elements in Vietnam. Diem himself said to me the other day he was "no good at such negotiations". He didn't like to make deals and "to buy" support by concessions and favors. He added that it had been great mistake on his part to take the Sects into the government. He should have formed a government of officials, men without regard to their political affiliations or support. I replied to him that he could govern without organized political support only if he had authority over the army and the police force but that he did not yet have such authority.

Heath

751G.00/10–1354 : Telegram

The Chargé in Laos (Rives) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, October 13, 1954—2 p. m.
[Received October 14—7:13 a. m.]

60. Repeated information Saigon 100, Paris 32, London, New Delhi unnumbered. From Yost. ReDeptel sent Vientiane 61, Paris 1316, New Delhi 432.[1] Crown Prince sent British Minister and myself word that, as King due Laos October 24, he would prefer have us present our credentials to His Majesty in Luang Prabang. We therefore requested informal interview and were received separately yesterday morning.

After usual amenities Prince launched into bitter complaint at pressure exerted Laos at Geneva to sign unwelcome and dangerous agreement. He was equally critical his own government which he said yielded contrary his advice and has since lost two months by failure take decisive action. Change is therefore imperative and he hopes for "young team" which will cope vigorously with Communist danger. He expected negotiations might take two weeks after opening Assembly but would use threat of dissolution if necessary and is confident of success. He mentioned no names.

Prince was also critical International Commission for slowness getting teams into field. He said he had hand-picked governors for two northern provinces who are ready go in immediately International Commission does so, though he fears lives would be in danger if they went in first. He believes Viet Minh will withdraw more or less on schedule and chief danger arises from Pathet Lao. He is deeply concerned forced recruiting young Laos, pointing out some will be taken Peking and Moscow for indoctrination and will constitute threat for many years (I took occasion suggest he invite Nehru's attention to these Communist violations truce agreement). Despite opportunity Pathet Lao had to dig in, Prince is hopeful they can be successfully combatted since they constitute small minority Lao people. He assured me Lao crown and government would resist Communist menace at whatever cost and whether or not they received support from other states.

I assured him of US desire aid Laos in this struggle in all practicable ways, mentioning continuance our aid program and fact that aid would be furnished directly his government. He urged economic aid be directed primarily to peasants, constituting 95 percent population, in form of technical assistance, irrigation projects, roads and public health, rather than to city-dwellers, commerce and industry. He expressed awareness importance capable and honest Lao administrators in carrying out program.

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[1] In the reference telegram, dated Oct. 8, the Department of State informed the Legation that the British were concerned about the situation in Laos. It was recommended that Yost coordinate his efforts with the British Minister, Talbot, upon the arrival of the latter, in consulting the Crown Prince on measures to strengthen the Laotian Government and insure its control over all of its territory. (751G.00/10–854)

As Department will observe, Prince himself fully alive to dangers described by Rives and I needed only emphasize we shared his apprehensions and his desire for prompt action. He was grateful our support and only in case Thai problem (reference previous Legation telegram) implied some doubt our intentions. Both British Minister and I much impressed by his grasp of situation, his resolution and decisiveness. Given effective support by western powers and Thais, there seems good prospect he should be able stabilize Laotian situation.

Since he still lacks coding facilities, Talbot requests American Embassy London repeat gist this interview to Foreign Office. His interview covered substantially same ground, minus discussion economic aid and plus heavy emphasis by Prince re Chinese inspiration and direction behind Viet Minh and Pathet Lao. Presumably he felt this emphasis unnecessary for Americans.

Rives

751G.00/10–1454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, October 14, 1954—6 p. m.

159. Sent Saigon, Vientiane and New Delhi unnumbered. I had long talk last night with Ambassador Parthasarathi, chairman of International Control Commission. As previous telegrams from this Embassy have suggested, he seems a mixture of good intentions blended with standard Indian shibboleths re democracy, justice and communism.

Parthasarathi said his observations led him to believe that Cambodians, "Vietnamese" (by which he consistently referred to Vietminh) and what he termed the Khmer resistance movement really bore no fundamental ill will toward one another and could, if Cambodian Government rose above petty issues, easily get along as one happy family. He said he was convinced of sincerity of Vietminh and Khmer resistance leaders in insisting all they wished in Cambodia was peace and that they had no specific political ambitions. He said he felt Cambodian Government would be well advised to permit Communists to participate in elections next year, particularly since, in his judgment, total adherents in Cambodian population did not number more than one million and chances of Communist success at polls were not bright.

Indian Ambassador said, speaking for himself since he had not referred this matter to his government, he was convinced International Commission had duty to see that elections were conducted according to principles of democracy and justice, although he admitted Geneva accord per se did not give specific writ for Commission to supervise elections. He based argument largely upon nine power declaration rather than Cambodian cease fire agreement.

In this final interview I did not seek to enter into debate but raised eyebrows at appropriate intervals. When Indian chairman spoke in passing of requirement for his commission to supervise introduction of war matériel into Cambodia, I said pointedly that it was relief to see Article 7 of Cambodian cease fire agreement was specific on point that Cambodian Government had right to bring in war matériel and foreign instructors to degree necessary to provide for effective defense of its territory.

McCLINTOCK

751G.00/10-1654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PARIS, October 16, 1954—1 p. m.

1608. Repeated information Saigon 197. Press here tending stress that portion Senator Mansfield report[1] "In event of Diem losing power, U.S. should consider an immediate suspension of all aid to Vietnam and French Union Forces." Although we aware during Senator Mansfield's visit Paris he apparently convinced Diem formula offers only hope solution, as Department and Embassy Saigon aware, French and Bao Dai, while in agreement support Diem as result Washington talks, do not think Diem likely succeed and believe we may all have to reach some agreement on substitute formula if Diem should fail. On other hand, as portrayed press here, Senator Mansfield's report does not appear to allow for any substitute formula in such an eventuality.

Whereas we believe Senator Mansfield's forthright appraisal weaknesses all too evident south Vietnamese political fabric may serve to bring home to all Vietnamese political elements greater awareness urgency of situation and necessity reconcile internal differences if continued external assistance to be expected; we believe it should also be kept in mind that pessimistic tenor Senator Mansfield report may tend increase conviction certain quarters here that South Vietnam finished (since they feel certain Diem cannot succeed) and it perhaps best to begin "betting on Vietminh to win race while only playing South Vietnam in meanwhile to place or show." We also inclined find somewhat disquieting implication rigidity contained press versions Senator Mansfield's report to effect Diem only solution and if he goes down all is lost. We cannot help but feel that we must continue try save South Vietnam regardless individual personalities involved including Diem.[2]

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[1] Regarding the Mansfield report, published Oct. 15, see footnote 2, p. 1997.

DILLON

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[2] In a memorandum of Oct. 15 summarizing the Mansfield report for the Secretary of State, Deputy Assistant Secretary Drumright set forth the following basic conclusion: "Senator Mansfield's report should greatly strengthen the Diem Government and give its opponents pause to consider. Mansfield's criticism of American policy is not unbearable. It is put forward in an effort to help and is not partisan in nature." (PSA files, lot 58 D 207, "Viet-Nam: Senator Mansfield")

On Oct. 17, Ambassador Heath reported the following from Saigon (telegram 1478): "Senator Mansfield's declaration was reported by Vietnam Presse as including recommendation that US suspend aid if Diem Government fell and take new look at situation and criticizing Hinh. It has evidently made impact on French and Vietnamese official circles. Diem and his supporters are jubilant. Anti-Diem groups are angry. Xuan in his talk with Ely and me yesterday referred sourly to the 'unfortunate Mansfield statement.'" (751G.00/10–1754)

Eisenhower Library, "Project 'Clean Up', Indochina"

Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Cutler)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] October 19, 1954.

At a meeting in the President's office on October 18, a discussion took place between the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, relative to expenditures by the US Government in South Vietnam.

Mr. Wilson seemed to be of the opinion that it was hopeless to try to save South Vietnam, and that further expenditures were wasted money. Mr. Dulles pointed out that he had just written Mr. Wilson to the effect that a proposed $500 million program for South Vietnam "was silly", but that some lesser amount for the purpose of building up a sufficient local force to insure internal stability and counteract subversion was reasonable and wise. He could not say what this would cost, but certainly he did not think it would cost more than $100 million.

ROBERT CUTLER

751G.00/10-1954

Memorandum of Conversation, by Paul J. Sturm of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] October 19, 1954.

Subject: Call of Mr. Pierre Pelletier of French Embassy on Mr. Young

Participants: Mr. Pierre Pelletier, Second Secretary, French Embassy Washington
Mr. Kenneth T. Young, Jr., PSA
Mr. P. J. Sturm, PSA

Mr. Pelletier called on Mr. Young today at his own request to say he had been instructed to inform the Department that Premier Mendes-France will take advantage of Mr. Eden's presence in Paris [1] to inform the British Foreign Secretary of the September Franco-American talks on Indochina. Mendes-France will see Eden on October 20, and talks will be continued the following day by British and French experts. (Similar information comes from Paris in the Embassy's telegram 1644).[2] Pelletier said the meeting would be concerned only with a general exchange of views.

Saying he wished to review with the Department current developments in Indochina, Pelletier said with regard to Laos that Crown Prince Savang remains suspicious that the U.S. had given aid and comfort to Prince Petsarath. High Commissioner Breal has already discussed this question with Minister Yost, and Pelletier said he alluded to it only because of Savang's importance as an outstanding Lao leader whose views must be taken into account.

Mr. Young with reference to this issue said that the Thais are anxious to set their relations with Laos on a good basis, and that the U.S. is anxious to lend all practicable assistance. He went on to say that we are concerned with Viet Minh–Pathet Lao activities in the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua and would be glad to have Mr. La Chambre's comments following his recent visit to Laos. Mr. Young asked if the French Embassy was in touch with the Canadian Embassy regarding the work of the International Control Commission. Pelletier replied in the negative.

Referring to Cambodia, Pelletier said he had nothing in particular to discuss and no recent information. Mr. Young said we are preparing instructions for Ambassador McClintock to open negotiations on post-

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[1] Nine-Power, Four-Power, and North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meetings were held at Paris during the period Oct. 20–23. For documentation on these sessions, see volume v.

[2] Telegram 1644 from Paris, Oct. 19, is not printed. (751G.00/10-1954)

Geneva economic and military assistance to Cambodia, and hope these negotiations may be under way shortly.

Pelletier continued by saying that the French are much concerned with the crisis in Viet-Nam, where affairs are going badly despite French hopes that it may be possible to carry out the terms of the latest Franco–American understanding on this country. It is becoming clear that if the situation is not soon improved, all may be lost in Viet-Nam. Pelletier recently received a personal letter from Jean Daridan in Saigon conveying a black impression of the political situation in Viet-Nam and expressing concern that French and U.S. advice to the protagonists has so far been fruitless.

Mr. Young replied that we are disturbed by the fact that Viet-Nam seems no nearer a unified national government than at the time of the September French–American talks. The present trouble is attributable to the three generals (Hinh, Xuan and Bay Vien). While we are pleased that latest advice indicates the Army is not now insisting on holding civil posts in the government, we note that the crisis continues to revolve about who will hold the Defense Ministry (and to a lesser extent the Interior Ministry).

Pelletier said the Embassy had been deeply impressed by the Mansfield Report and asked whether it was important in the sense of representing the views of Congress. The Embassy has sent it to Paris, calling attention to the conclusions.

Mr. Young replied that Senator Mansfield is particularly well informed on Indochina and that his views may be expected to be influential when the subject comes up in Congress.

Mr. Pelletier remarked that since Governor Stassen said Congress would have to be consulted regarding further support to FEC, the Mansfield Report will be important in this context.

Pelletier then inquired whether we thought it would be useful if the Thai petition for a POC were granted.[3] Mr. Young said that we do think a POC in the area would be helpful, even though it did not operate in Indochina, and invited Pelletier to discuss a report on this subject from the French Embassy in Bangkok with Mr. Landon. He added that we think the Thai fears of infiltration and pressures from Communist China are valid.

Pelletier asked our view on moving Vietnamese residents in Thailand back to Viet-Nam.[4] Mr. Young said we have asked Embassy Saigon's comments; meanwhile our feeling is that such a population movement would be very burdensome to the already overtaxed government of Viet-Nam.

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[3] Regarding a possible appeal by Thailand to the United Nations for Peace Observation Commission observers, see editorial note, p. 1635. In the autumn of 1954, Thailand again considered entering a request. Documentation on this subject is in file 320.2 AB.

[4] Documentation on Vietnamese refugees in Thailand is in file 892.411/8–1454.

Mr. Young concluded the interview by saying that we remain anxious to carry out the memorandum of understanding which followed the Washington talks, and that we would be glad to have the views of Mr. La Chambre on his return from Indochina.

751G.00/10-2054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, October 20, 1954—4 p. m.

1501. Repeated information Paris 496. I talked at length with Diem yesterday. Sunday [1] he had seen Xuan and had offered him vice presidency. Yesterday Diem, presumably encouraged by widely circulated Mansfield declaration that US should suspend aid if his government fell, went back on this offer and said he would not have Xuan in Cabinet at any price. He based his reversal on "unalterable opposition" of Hoa Haos and Cao Dais to Xuan's presence in government. (*Comment:* This is contrary to our information from Colonel Thai that Hoa Haos and Cao Dais could be persuaded, reluctantly, to accept Xuan as vice president.) I reminded Diem I had advised him on Saturday he could not reach [*refuse?*] vice presidency to Xuan without being in conflict with Bao Dai's recommendation that Xuan be given this post.[2] I remarked in view of his new decision to offer nothing to Xuan governmental deadlock would continue to disadvantage of government and Vietnam, and inquired what solution he had. His only solution was to telegraph Bao Dai asking latter to issue instructions to Bay Vien to come into his government.

I expressed doubt that Bao Dai, for reasons of face and also because in his present weak position he would not wish to offend any faction, would order Bay Vien to participate in government. Diem then said it would be necessary for France and US to bring pressure on Bao Dai. I expressed doubt that pressure could be effectively brought to bear on Bao Dai at this precise moment. I said I would report our conversation to Department.

Diem then said if he were to govern at all he had to have minimum of power in his hands, which he would not have if Xuan took over vice presidency and Defense Ministry. Diem said it was more than ever clear that Hinh must go. Leading French officers assigned to Vietnamese Army were, Diem asserted, convinced Hinh was obstacle to effective reorganization of army. Xuan would be no better. Increasing number of officers were coming or sending word to Diem that they disapproved of Hinh's policy and rebellious attitude toward government. They were for Diem, latter asserted, because he represented an ideal. This increasing opposition in army to Hinh, however, had not yet progressed to point, Diem said that he could issue order sending Hinh away on mission or dismissing him. Moment that such action would be practical, however, might not be long delayed, Diem hoped.

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[1] Oct. 17.

[2] Ambassador Heath summarized his separate meetings with Diem and General Ely on Oct. 16 in telegram 1472 of that date. (751G.00/10-1654)

HEATH

751G.5/10-2054

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Davis) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 20, 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: This letter is in partial response to your letter dated 11 October 1954 in which you asked, among other things, for the views of the Department of Defense on the assumption by the United States of training responsibilities for Vietnamese forces.

The question of training Vietnamese forces has been reconsidered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff whose views are reflected below.[1]

The Department of Defense desires to point out that in addition to current unstable political situation in Vietnam the terms of the Geneva Armistice Agreement have been interpreted by the Department of State to limit the strength of MAAG, Indochina, to 342 military personnel. Even if all these military personnel were replaced by United States civilians to perform the normal functions of the MAAG and the military personnel were thereby released for training duties only, the number of US military personnel would permit only limited participation in the over-all training program. Under these conditions, US participation in the training not only would probably have but limited beneficial effect, but also would assume responsibility for any failure of the program.

In light of the foregoing and from a military point of view, the Department of Defense considers that the United States should not participate in the training of Vietnamese forces in Indochina. However, if it is considered that political considerations are overriding, the Department of Defense would agree to the assignment of a training mission to MAAG, Saigon, with safeguards against French interference with the US training effort. If it is decided that political considerations are overriding, the US should undertake such training responsibilities only if the number of US MAAG personnel authorized to enter Vietnam is sufficient to undertake an effective training program.

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[1] For a memorandum of Oct. 19 from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense on "Development and Training of Indigenous Forces in Indochina," see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 10, pp. 771–774.

Sincerely yours, A. C. DAVIS

751G.00/10-2154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Department of State [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, October 21, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received October 20—9 : 57 p. m.]

Dulte 5. Repeated information Saigon 209. Eyes only Acting Secretary from Secretary. Saigon eyes only Ambassador. During and after dinner tonight with Mendes-France, we discussed Indochina. I said our recent reports indicated disturbing internal situation South Vietnam. Mendes-France agreed situation serious, but said understandable we should now be at psychological low point following armistice. He was also firm regarding importance giving Diem every chance. He went on, however, to say that plans should be laid for "another structure of government" which could be produced in event Diem failure. In response my question, he was unclear as to meaning his phrase and indicated he had no other local political figure in mind as possible replacement Diem. He stressed, however, importance of utilizing thread legitimacy deriving from Bao Dai, although he was frank in discussing latter's failures and spoke of necessity keeping him off front of stage.

At conclusion conversation, Mendes-France indicated desire before my departure to discuss situation South Vietnam and what we might do about it at greater length. In anticipation such further talk, I would appreciate receiving urgently Department's latest estimate political developments.

DULLES

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[1] Secretary Dulles was in Paris for Nine-Power, Four-Power, and NATO Ministerial Meetings, which are documented in volume v.

751G.00/10-2154 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY HANOI, October 21, 1954—3 p. m.

318. Sent Saigon 416, Paris 113. Called on Sainteny this morning for brief exchange impressions recent developments.

He said he had long visit with Ho Chi Minh October 18 and found him looking better than ever and slightly stouter than before. All rumors concerning Ho's death or disappearance thus proved false. From "psychological" point of view he found Ho's attitude "surprising". Ho Chi Minh was disposed to retain French presence and culture in north Vietnam and to continue contact with France and other non-Communist countries. Sainteny said Ho Chi Minh indicated he was not only inclined to have relations with non-Communist nations but in a position to do so. That is, Ho was not a "slave" of other Viet Minh elements. Sainteny is not sure himself of just what real authority Ho Chi Minh possesses at this juncture.

Sainteny says he has no illusions about genuineness of Viet Minh brand of Communism. They are Communists but he is inclined to believe they are "moderate" Communists. He thinks the "moderation" may just be part of current Malenkov party line but feels it is further modified by strong unwillingness to be completely absorbed into Sino-Soviet bloc.

Viet Minh attitude towards French cultural presence is, he says, encouraging. Lycee Albert Sarraut has entrance applications from more Vietnamese students than it can handle. Sainteny is asking Saigon to send ten or twelve more teachers.

Sainteny has the impression that the present phase of Viet Minh occupation is a military one and that the Viet Minh civil government will remain out of the city for the time being.

Sainteny had an interesting conversation with Nehru. He thinks Nehru would like to be the great peacemaker of the Far East but found him very well informed on affairs in north Vietnam and possessed of an engaging personality and great popularity. He summarized his attitude towards the Viet Minh by saying: "You can be a colonizer or a slave trader (Negrier). If you are a colonizer you build the colonial peoples up and then when they are built up they no longer want to remain colonials. It is natural. It is better to make peace with them than to fight such a war as we have fought here."

Sainteny will fly to Saigon tomorrow for another meeting with LaChambre.[1]

CORCORAN

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[1] Telegram 1583 from Ambassador Heath at Saigon, Oct. 26, read as follows:

"Over week end Sainteny came to see me. While he professed scepticism that DRV would behave any differently than other Communist states, he nevertheless insisted there was a possibility DRV might follow policy of 'peaceful co-existence' with free world and might even be encouraged thereto by Communist China. He said he did not take as gospel Ho Chi Minh's assurance to him 'peaceful co-existence' would be sought for but he thought it was possibility that should be explored. Altogether Sainteny gave me impression of still indulging in wishful thinking and I certainly had very definite impression he conceived of his position in Hanoi as much more than that of a consular protector of French interests." (751G.00/10–2654)

751G.00/10-2154 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRIORITY HANOI, October 21, 1954—1 p. m.

319. Sent Saigon 418, Paris 114. Following is translation of article appearing last page *Nhandan* of October 20:

"American imperialists, since their defeat at Geneva, have become stupid. The American imperialists are stupid—they don't face facts. All the world knows that the Geneva agreement has clearly stated that all French troops must withdraw from Hanoi and many other cities in North Vietnam, and that the DRV will take over and manage these cities. Here, some days ago, the French High Command signed an agreement with DRV delegates handing over the city of Hanoi. On October 10 the Government and the army of the DRV triumphantly entered and took over Hanoi. The power of the DRV has superseded French and rebel (Bao Dai) powers. All these things have made the Americans angry, and they are in despair. Reactionary American journalists and the American radio are pessimistic about the DRV takeover of Hanoi. Then, the Americans stupidly tried to perpetrate a ruse. The Americans have not established diplomatic relations with us nevertheless they have kept the Hanoi Consulate open. The American State Department has declared: 'The Geneva treaty has not settled the question of the establishment of a new government in zones evacuated by French troops. That is why the American Consulate has remained open.' Only fools are ignorant of the fact that the present political power in Hanoi is the power of the Vietnamese people, which is led by the DRV Government." *End of Article.*

CORCORAN

751G.00/10-2154 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 21, 1954—7:44 p. m.
NIACT

Tedul 11. Eyes only Secretary from Acting Secretary. Eyes only Heath. Dulte 5.[2] For your ready reference we quote paragraph 4 of the September 29 Minute of Understanding:

"With respect to Viet-Nam, the representatives of France and the United States agree that their respective governments support Ngo Dinh Diem in the establishment and maintenance of a strong, anti-Communist and nationalist government. To this end France and the United States will urge all anti-Communist elements in Viet-Nam cooperate fully with Government of Ngo Dinh Diem in order count- vigorously the Viet Minh and build a strong free Viet-Nam."

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[1] Drafted by Young and Sturm of PSA and Fisher of WE. Repeated for information to Saigon as telegram 1663.

[2] Dated Oct. 21, p. 2147.

Brief estimate political situation South Viet-Nam follows:

1. While General Hinh's threat to execute military coup seems to have been averted, Hinh and his associates Xuan and Bay Vien continue hold virtual veto power over Diem and his government. Prolongation of crisis leads to inevitable deterioration of government's position and prospects, even if it is no longer menaced by violent overthrow.

We do not feel that sufficient effort has yet been made to carry out above quoted U.S.-French agreement. While Ely seems to have attempted honestly carry out this agreement, fact that many French elements have never accepted Diem solution must have weakened Ely's efforts and encouraged Hinh camarilla in its recalcitrance. (In this connection see Paris 1660).[3] We remain of opinion that military personalities now opposing Diem are more susceptible to French pressure and influence than any other similarly powerful elements in Viet-Nam.

Broad government of national union around Diem has not been achieved. Until the current civil-military sect conflict is resolved any successor Prime Minister would be faced with substantially similar problem with which he might be even less able to cope than Diem, except on conditions prejudicial to establishment of government of integrity.

2. Current jockeying for power and struggle for cabinet positions is resulting in paralyzing impasse. Positive moves are necessary by France and the U.S. if this impasse is to be broken. We remain convinced that if anything is to be saved in Viet-Nam we cannot sacrifice indispensable qualities of honesty, incorruptibility and nationalism represented more conspicuously at this moment by Diem than by anyone else.

3. Mendes-France's use of term "another structure of government" suggests French hankering to reestablish political system similar to that of 1946 Cochinchinese Republic, founded on police and military power to be exercised by such figures as Tam and Hinh. In addition to such pro-French figures, system might involve direct colonial-type controls by French. Such a formula in French eyes would have advantage of facilitating elimination of Bao Dai and non-Cochinchinese elements like Diem. A development of this sort in our view would create conditions in South Viet-Nam analogous to those which ended by delivering to Viet Minh northern half of Viet-Nam, even though it might in the short run restore internal order.

4. We agree with Mendes-France's feeling that perpetuation of Bao Dai in present role preserves thread of legality. We believe however that when some legislative body can take over from him his present

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[3] Not printed.

appointive powers the time will have come to remove him from the scene.

5. OCB on October 20 approved initiation military training program by MAAG Saigon to be undertaken soonest with personnel and other resources now available there. Necessary instructions to MAAG and Embassy now in process. We hope this step, together with delivery of President's letter to Diem, will strengthen Diem in his relations both with French and other Vietnamese.

6. In summary, unless Diem receives unreserved U.S. and French support, his chances of success appear slight. With such support, his chances are probably better than even.

HOOVER

751G.13/10–2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 22, 1954—6 p. m.

1536. Sent Paris 505. For the Secretary. Reference Paris telegram 209.[1] For more than 40 days Diem and General Hinh have been deadlocked. And 40 days have been largely lost which government with necessary cooperation of army should have employed in establishing its authority over provinces, extirpating Viet Minh infiltration and terrorism, and winning rural population. Fault certainly initially was Hinh's but failure to find compromise solution is in large part due to Diem's lack of personality, his inability to win over people of opposite views, his stubbornness and intransigence, his general political ineptitude, and his slowness in decision and action. We have by our advice partially remedied some of his deficiencies. We have kept him from doing certain things that would have been bad for his government, and have gotten him to take certain steps to improve his administration, but we have had to compete with his own willfulness and entourage of personal friends and family members whose advice has generally been bad.

Since he has neither police nor army backing him and the two sects he has finally won over with some assistance from us are insufficient to give him a force basis, it was obviously necessary for him to compromise with General Hinh and with General Bay Vien who controls police. He has arrived in principle at compromise with latter but with Hinh at present refuses to treat further or envisage any other solution except that Hinh be ignominiously dismissed. Hinh by his own cleverness and government mistakes has fairly well succeeded in making his cause army's own. Menace of cutting off American aid which pays bulk of army's budget has not so far deterred influential element of officer corps from making common cause with Hinh. General Ely's and my representations have so far kept Hinh and his camarilla from overthrowing government by force and our joint influence persuaded Bao Dai not to raise again his implied request that Diem resign.

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[1] For telegram Dulte 5, repeated to Saigon as telegram 209, Oct. 21, see p. 2147.

I believe there has been every reason to have upheld Diem to date since he does represent an ideal and he enjoys certain prestige and confidence among masses of population. He has largely lost during course continuing deadlock, prestige and confidence of literate, articulate sections of Vietnamese community. There is still no worthy successor in sight, and we must gain time to prepare what Mendes-France calls "another structure of government". We cannot however lose much time. Everyone in Embassy is convinced that Diem cannot organize and administer strong government.

Diem somewhat as a constitutional European president without direct control over day to day operations of government might make useful contribution. In such position he could influence government policies, he could get out and visit villages where he still retains some popularity and confidence. To date, however, he has hardly left presidential palace, where indeed he had been working eighteen hours a day largely due to his inability to organize and to delegate responsibility. In order fill this role Diem would have to leave actual operation of government to capable people. He has already demonstrated, unfortunately, that he is little capable of delegating responsibility. Such a role, moreover, would be counter to his fanatic sense of personal mission. It is also doubtful he would accept any limitation of his authority.

Diem has put his difficulties up to Bao Dai and hopes against hope that latter will order army, Binh Xuyen, and General Xuan to cooperate with Diem Government. I entertain no such hopes because Bao Dai has no such authority. Bao Dai has replied to Diem that he is sending answer to his cable by personal messenger, Diem's brother Luyen, who will not arrive here before two or three days at earliest.

We agree with Mendes-France that it is important to maintain for a while "thread of legitimacy deriving from Bao Dai". Until there is a provisional legislative body and probably a provisional constitution issuing therefrom for Vietnam, Bao Dai should probably remain. We will probably have to use Bao Dai's "thread of legitimate authority to compel Diem either to constitute efficient government or, if he remains intractable and inept, to resign in favor of some person or persons capable of forming a government strong enough to keep free Vietnam from going Communist. We must work out from Paris Embassy some system of keeping contact with and of influencing Bao Dai.

We cannot leave that job entirely to French. Mendes-France's policy and actions to date and those of Commissioner General Ely have been loyal and cooperative. But there are too many French officials and officers below Prime Minister Mendes-France and Ely who are neither loyal nor cooperative. Hinh and his camarilla of officers have been more than tacitly encouraging French officers and individuals and general attitude of French officers and officials is, except to extent that it is checked by Ely, to get rid of Diem even if he were efficient chief of government because he is "anti-French".

La Chambre has returned to Saigon and I will have long talk with him tomorrow.

I am still confident that a government and a solid army can yet be built in free Vietnam.

HEATH

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 218th Meeting of the National Security Council, Friday, October 22, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Present at this meeting were the President of the United States, presiding; the Acting Secretary of State; the Acting Secretary of Defense; the Acting Director, Foreign Operations Administration; the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization; the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; the Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers (for Item 5); the Director, U.S. Information Agency (Items 4 and 5); the Secretary of the Navy (Items 2–5); the Secretary of the Air Force (Items 2–5); Assistant Secretary of State Robertson (Items 2–5); Assistant Secretary of Defense Quarles (Items 2 and 3); Robert R. Bowie and Kenneth T. Young, Department of State (latter for Item 4); the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (Items 2–5); the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (Items 2–5); the Chief of Naval Operations (Items 2–5); the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force (Items 2–5); the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps (Items 2–5); the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; the White House Staff Secretary; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on Oct. 23.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

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4. *Indochina* (NSC 5429/2)[2]

Mr. Cutler observed that the forthcoming reports would assist us in estimating the possibilities of saving the non-Communist areas of Indochina. He then restated the existing policy of the United States vis-à-vis free Indochina, as set forth in NSC 5429/2, and read the gloomy conclusions of the Special National Intelligence Estimate on South Vietnam.[3] Mr. Cutler concluded his remarks with a brief reference to the plus and minus factors, noting that Acting Secretary of State Hoover would doubtless expand on both. He then called on Secretary Hoover to read his report (copy filed in the minutes of the meeting).[4]

Secretary Hoover first commented on the continuing political crisis in South Vietnam and the steps which would be necessary to break the political stalemate and to save the area from Communism. He then turned to the program which the OCB had decided on as the first stage of U.S. action.[5] The major questions before the OCB were the training and force levels of the Vietnamese army. It had been decided that as the first stage a limited training mission should be undertaken immediately as a crash program designed to sustain the Diem government and establish security in Free Vietnam. This amounted to a mission of reorienting the top officers of the Vietnam Army away from Hinh and toward Diem. The next stage, and the longer term program, would involve consideration of the ultimate force levels for Vietnam and Cambodia to carry out paragraph 10–*d* of NSC 5429/2.

With respect to Cambodia, Secretary Hoover reported that the situation was much more favorable, and a good possibility existed for achieving our objectives. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have given approval of the establishment of a MAAG in Cambodia. FOA has named an Acting Director for Cambodia, and a separate FOA mission will be in operation there in the near future.

Thirdly, Secretary Hoover cited the statistics for the evacuation of North Vietnam through October 15, 1954. The total number of evacuees was estimated at 423,000, of whom 74,000 were military personnel.

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[2] For NSC 5429/2, "Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East", Aug. 20, 1954, see volume XII.

[3] Reference is presumably to SNIE 63–6–54, Sept. 15; for text, see p. 2028.

[4] Not identified.

[5] The outline Minutes of the Operations Coordinating Board, 1953–1960, are in OCB files, lot 62 D 430, "Minutes." Periodic reports on "Summary of Action Requirements for OCB Special Working Group on Indochina," and certain other papers of the Special Working Group are filed in OCB files, lot 62 D 430, "SEA #1–#2."

There remained to be evacuated between 75,000 and 100,000 individuals. Nearly 100,000 tons of military matériel had likewise been evacuated. Troop movements were slightly ahead of schedule, military cargo slightly behind schedule because of labor shortages and inadequate port facilities.

Some $40 million had been allocated for implementation of the refugee resettlement program. There was, accordingly, no shortage of money, but the refugees from North Vietnam were still living in temporary shelters in the Saigon area. Over 250,000 would ultimately have to be resettled on a permanent basis in the south.

At the conclusion of Secretary Hoover's report, the President inquired whether any agreement had been reached between the Departments of State and Defense with respect to the crash military training program which Secretary Hoover had just described. Secretary Hoover did not give a direct answer, but again indicated that the objective of the so-called crash program was to reorient existing Vietnamese forces away from Hinh and to Diem.

Mr. Cutler pointed out that the OCB had been in the process of drafting a message of instruction to the U.S. Ambassadors in Saigon and Paris and to the Chief of the USMAAG, Saigon, General O'Daniel. Mr. Cutler said he believed that this message had not been wholly agreed to by the Defense Department, and that Admiral Radford would probably wish to comment on it. He then called upon Assistant Secretary of State Robertson to read the proposed message (copy filed in the minutes of the meeting).[6] After reading the message, Secretary Robertson stressed that this was intended to initiate the crash program to which Secretary Hoover had referred, and that the immediate objective was to ensure the internal security of Free Vietnam.

After indicating his belief that the consent of the French Government would be necessary if this program were to be initiated, the President inquired what would happen if the French refused to concur in the arrangements set forth in the draft message. Secretary Robertson replied that in this contingency we would be completely stymied, since General Hinh was a French citizen, as were several others of the clique who were opposing Prime Minister Diem. This clique was really controlled by the French, and while the French had theoretically agreed to support Diem as a result of recent conversations with our officials in Washington, we had doubts as to whether they were actually living up to this commitment.

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[6] The draft cited here has not been positively identified. However, for a State–Defense draft of Oct. 21 which may be the document under reference, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 10, pp. 783–788. For the message as transmitted, see telegram 1679 to Saigon, Oct. 22, p. 2131.

The President then inquired whether, under the terms of the Geneva armistice, the United States could legally increase the size of its Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Free Vietnam. Secretary Robertson replied that opinions differed on this point. The Legal Adviser to the State Department, Mr. Phleger, believed that we could not legally increase the size of our MAAG. The Defense Department lawyers, on the other hand, believed that if the French would agree to lower the number of French officers engaged in training the native forces, the United States could increase the number of its advisers commensurately.

Mr. Cutler then called on Admiral Radford to explain the objections of the Defense Department to the arrangements set forth in the draft message. Admiral Radford replied that the Joint Chiefs were still strongly of the opinion that it would be most difficult to do a satisfactory job of building up and training the Vietnamese native forces in the absence of a stable government in South Vietnam. The State Department had, of course, insisted that this was a "hen-and-egg" problem, arguing that in the absence of a stronger military posture in Free Vietnam, there could be no political stability. Admitting that there was much in this argument. Admiral Radford said that if it were decided that political considerations were overriding in this matter, the Joint Chiefs would do the best they could to achieve the desired objectives.

There were at least two major problems, continued Admiral Radford. In the first place, all the available native military forces in South Vietnam, which he estimated as about 235,000, would be required simply to achieve the objective of safeguarding the internal security of the country. The cost to train and maintain a force of this size, including pay, food, clothing, etc., but not including cost of equipment, was estimated to amount to about $443 million for Vietnam and an additional $93 million for Cambodia annually. To this sum must be added the cost to the United States of its assistance in maintaining the French Expeditionary Force in Indochina. The Joint Chiefs estimated this amount as somewhere between $330 million and $400 million annually. Hence the total cost for Fiscal Year 1955 would run somewhere between $800 million and $1 billion. Admiral Radford raised the question of where money was to come from for carrying out a program of this magnitude.

In the second place, Admiral Radford indicated that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had restudied the problem the previous evening to see if it were possible to devise some smaller and more immediate program. They felt that if General O'Daniel got instructions to carry out the program set forth in the draft message, he would probably assume that he would have $400 million to spend. General Ridgway confirmed Admiral Radford's statement by expressing the hope that the Joint Chiefs would be able to consider a smaller revised program that afternoon.

Speaking with conviction, the President observed that in the lands of the blind, one-eyed men are kings. What we wanted, continued the President, was a Vietnamese force which would support Diem. Therefore let's get busy and get one, but certainly not at a cost of $400 million a year. The President said that he knew something from personal experience about doing this kind of job in this kind of area. He therefore was sure that something could be done and done quickly if we could simply decide on what to tell General O'Daniel to do.

Admiral Radford replied that there were 342 U.S. military personnel now in Vietnam for the purpose of training the native forces. This was much too small a number for carrying out a large-scale training program. Perhaps, therefore, the smart thing was to tell O'Daniel to go to Diem and tell him that the MAAG would try to organize an effective constabulary that would take its orders from Diem rather than from the Army. Admiral Radford also added his belief that the French were not really supporting Diem, since if they chose to call Hinh off he could not continue to operate. Secretary Robertson added that the information in the State Department indicated that if the French would get Hinh out of the picture there would be no further difficulty between Diem and the Vietnamese National Army.

The President then asked why we did not "get rough with the French". If we didn't do something very quickly, Diem would be down the drain with no replacement in sight. Accordingly, we ought to lay down the law to the French. It is true that we have to cajole the French with regard to the European area, but we certainly didn't have to in Indochina.

Secretary Hoover pointed out that General O'Daniel's hands had been tied up to now, but his personal prestige and influence was very profound, and if given an opportunity to exert it he would have no great difficulty in reorienting Army loyalties to Diem. Mr. Allen Dulles expressed agreement with Secretary Hoover's estimate of O'Daniel's influence, and added that the trouble with France arose in part from the preoccupation of Premier Mendes-France with European problems. Mr. Dulles endorsed some such message to Saigon as Secretary Robertson had read, but with the addition of a caveat with regard to the costs.

The President then said that the obvious thing to do was simply to authorize General O'Daniel to use up to X millions of dollars—say, five, six or seven—to produce the maximum number of Vietnamese military units on which Prime Minister Diem could depend to sustain himself in power. Admiral Radford said that the time for rapid action was at hand, and that the OCB could redraft the proposed instructions along the lines just suggested by the President.

The President then pointed out that what the United States was undertaking to do in South Vietnam had already been agreed to by the French. Accordingly, we should inform Paris that we will not undertake any further steps in South Vietnam until they get rid of Hinh.

The National Security Council:[7]

a. Noted an oral progress report on Indochina by the Acting Secretary of State, based upon discussion at the last meeting of the Operations Coordinating Board, with particular reference to the Vietnam political crisis, implementation of U.S. military and economic aid programs, Cambodia, the evacuation from North Vietnam, and the refugee resettlement program.

b. Noted and discussed a draft message designed to initiate a U.S. program with respect to the reorganization and training of Free Vietnamese forces, as read by Assistant Secretary of State Robertson, based upon discussion at the last meeting of the Operations Coordinating Board.

c. Noted and discussed an oral report by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding a U.S. training program for Free Vietnamese forces, including their recommendations as to ultimate force levels and estimated costs thereof.

d. Noted the President's directive that the Secretary of State, with the cooperation of the Secretary of Defense, the Director, Foreign Operations Administration, and the Director of Central Intelligence, take immediate steps necessary to authorize the Chief, USMAAG, Saigon, in coordination with the U.S. Ambassador at Saigon, to undertake an urgent program to improve the loyalty and effectiveness of the Free Vietnamese forces, in order to assure the prompt availability of Free Vietnamese forces on which Premier Diem can depend to assist him in establishing and sustaining a broadly-based government in Free Vietnam; utilizing funds up to an amount to be determined by the President on the recommendation of the Secretary of State.

Note: The action in *d* above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State for appropriate implementation.

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[7] Points *a–d* below constituted NSC Action No. 1250, Oct. 22, 1954. (S/S–NSC files, lot 66 D 95, "NSC Actions")

751G.00/10-2254 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, October 22, 1954—7 : 46 p. m.

Tedul 13. Personal for Secretary. From Acting Secretary. I believe two subsequent telegrams on Viet-Nam[2] situation faithfully reflect your thinking. Telegram of instructions to Heath and O'Daniel on starting limited MAAG program represents intensive week of work and debate in OCB finally culminating in Defense and JCS acceptance. This is significant step. Whole matter presented to President this morning at NSC.[3] He approved general lines of action detailed by JCS and State in that telegram. We now have something concrete to work with. It carries risk but without some move we would remain on dead center.

Suggest if possible you inform Deputy Defense Secretary Anderson of this message and instructions to Heath and O'Daniel.

HOOVER

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA.

[2] See Tedul 14 (1678 to Saigon), *infra*, and telegram 1679 to Saigon (Tedul 15), p. 2161.

[3] See extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 218th Meeting of the National Security Council, Oct. 22, *supra*.

751G.00/10-2254 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, October 22, 1954—7 : 47 p. m.

Tedul 14. For Secretary and Heath from Acting Secretary. Today President and NSC reviewed unsatisfactory situation in Free Viet-Nam. They noted (*a*) Vietnamese Government still immobilized by opposition military clique despite US–French agreement on political action, (*b*) French have not been actively working to consolidate Diem government, and (*c*) some new immediate US moves are necessary to try break paralyzing impasse since time is running out and Diem government will otherwise collapse.

In light NSC discussion and at President's suggestion believe it would be useful if you would talk to Mendes-France along following lines:

(1) US and France can further free world objectives in Vietnam most effectively by giving their support and assistance to a govern-

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as telegram 1678.

ment of national union under Premiership of Diem, in accordance with September 29 understanding quoted in Tedul 11.[2] We believe French can still bring much more pressure on military cabal than has been exerted to make peace with Diem so that his government may proceed with urgent internal tasks.

(2) If US now proceeds to implement assistance programs, that action may help to establish government of national union around Diem which can begin to carry out its national program. Without waiting any longer for various personal decisions on distribution of cabinet seats, US accordingly is prepared to move forward on political, economic and military levels. In attempt to break discouraging stalemate our immediate program involves:

(*a*) Delivery of the President's letter to Diem [3] reiterating US support for Government of Free Vietnam and suggesting immediate discussions regarding US direct assistance, and

(*b*) The initiation of an immediate limited military advisory and training program by MAAG Saigon.

This second is the subject of a separate telegram [4] which the President hopes you will also be able to discuss in general terms with Mendes-France to secure his agreement.

(3) If a government of national union is not formed, or if formed does not receive full and unreserved support of national army or other groups and personalities throughout free Vietnam, or if Diem is removed from office or effectively prevented from developing broad government, the US will have to reconsider its aid to Vietnam and in particular whether it will continue even limited, short term assistance to prevent a critical emergency. In this respect conclusions of Senator Mansfield are relevant. At this time we see no satisfactory alternative governmental solution insofar as effective US assistance or forthcoming Congressional support are concerned.

For Heath Saigon: You are instructed (*a*) to deliver President's letter to Diem and notify Department of delivery for White House public release; (*b*) to indicate to Diem your readiness to follow up with preliminary talks on aid programs with Vietnamese officials; (*c*) make known above US positions to Vietnamese and French officials; and (*d*) work out with Ely concrete steps to implement Deptel 1382 [5] re Hinh, Xuan and Vien.

This message should be taken in conjunction with joint State–Defense message on training Vietnamese forces.

HOOVER

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[2] Dated Oct. 21, p. 2149.

[3] *Post*, p. 2166.

[4] *Infra*.

[5] Not found in Department of State files.

611.90/10–2254 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 22, 1954—7:48 p. m.

1679. Joint State–Defense message to US Ambassador Saigon and Chief of US MAAG Saigon. The following message contains the policy of the US Government and your instructions necessary in furtherance of paragraphs 10–*a* and 10–*d*, Part IV of "US Policy Toward the Far East" transmitted by State Department instruction A–28 of Sept. 10, 1954.[2]

Part I

(1) It is US Government policy to support the Government of Free Vietnam under the Premiership of Ngo Dinh Diem and to assist that Government (*a*) to promote internal security and political stability in Free Vietnam, (*b*) to establish and maintain control by that Government throughout the territory of Free Vietnam, and (*c*) effectively to counteract Viet Minh infiltration and paramilitary activities south of the 17th Parallel.

(2) It is realized that the principal stumbling block to effecting the policies outlined above is concerned with the loyalty of the existing Vietnamese armed forces, and particularly the loyalty of the Chief of Staff of those forces, General Hinh. It is further apparent that any long range program of aid for and training of these Vietnamese armed forces can have no appreciable effect on the immediate situation. It is therefore directed that the Ambassador and the Chief of MAAG collaborate in setting in motion a crash program designed to bring about an improvement in the loyalty and the effectiveness of the Free Vietnamese forces. For this purpose the assets of all US Government agencies in Free Vietnam will be concentrated as necessary in the hope that within the immediate future (the next month or so) the present Diem government can be strengthened to such an extent that longer range programs can be decided upon with a reasonable expectation of success. The details of "how" are left in the hands of the Ambassador and General O'Daniel. The closest cooperation between US Ambassador and Chief MAAG will of course be required to ensure that these activities are consistent with the policies of the United States regarding the legal government of Vietnam.

(3) Financial limitations are not prescribed for this crash program, as it is considered here that necessary resources are now available to

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Also sent niact to Paris as Tedul 15.

[2] Airgram A–28 to Saigon, Sept. 10, transmitting excerpts from NSC 5429/2, is not printed. (611.90/9–1054) For the text of NSC 5429/2, Aug. 20, 1954, see volume XII.

Ambassador and MAAG Saigon for such actions as may be practical. Speed is essential to achieve success.

(4) If it is considered necessary, you both are authorized at any time to inform French authorities, Vietnamese authorities, and General Hinh personally of US objectives and to further state without equivocation that no long range support to the Vietnamese armed forces will be programmed or extended by the US as long as there is the slightest doubt as to the loyalty of the Chief of Staff or other high officers in those forces.

(5) Should you determine that it is not practical to work with the existing Vietnamese armed forces organization you are authorized, upon receipt of concurrence from Departments State and Defense, to approach the Prime Minister and to state that the United States is willing to commence immediately the organization of a national police or constabulary separated from the present Vietnamese armed forces if the Prime Minister is able to select an individual who is considered by you to be competent to command such an organization.

(6) US Ambassador is requested to undertake the necessary discussions and negotiations with the Government of Free Vietnam and local French authorities to obtain agreements (*a*) ensuring US MAAG Saigon will have the necessary authority, responsibility and freedom of action to carry out the above program; and (*b*) assuring the cooperation, coordination and assistance from Vietnamese and French authorities and personnel at all levels in Free Vietnam. US Ambassador will immediately consult with Chief MAAG to formulate the detailed agreements and assurances which MAAG requires. . . .

(7) It is desired that you jointly inform State and Defense Departments as to the plan of action you decide upon as a result of this directive, and, in addition, furnish progress reports upon which determination of future scope of US programs in support of the Government of Free Vietnam may be based.

(8) For your information, the Department of State will undertake to obtain appropriate understanding and means of augmenting the MAAG strength as required. In the meantime rotation as necessary to accomplish the objectives herein set forth can be provided.

Part II—Instructions for US Ambassador, Paris

Subject to such conversations as the Secretary of State may have with Mendes-France, you are requested to inform French Government of these instructions and to seek its agreement immediately to authorize General Ely to conclude the necessary agreements with the US Ambassador Saigon and Chief of MAAG to implement the above program.

HOOVER

751G.13/10-2354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, October 23, 1954—2 p. m.

1553. Sent priority Paris 510. Paris for the Secretary. My telegram 505 to Paris.[1] I plan to communicate to La Chambre and General Ely tonight substance of Department's telegram 1663 of October 21 [2] and say to them that these are my instructions to see Diem get full chance to succeed. I will say that "full chance" does not mean mental reservation that Diem cannot succeed and we are just utilizing waiting space to find a better candidate. I will say further that "full chance" means Hinh leaves Vietnam at least for space or effects reconciliation with Diem, which latter will be difficult, if not impossible, not so much on account of Hinh alone but because of unreliable character of certain of his camarilla and because of grudgeful, bitter intransigence of Diem re Hinh. I mean to say that I think the Diem solution as agreed upon at Washington does not mean we should fail emphatically to impress on Diem and army the necessity of real plan to eradicate Communist infiltration and win villages. Neither would support of Diem mean that he should not reorganize his present government to get more efficient and honest ministers. If he had support of army he would be less dependent upon support of two sects and Binh Xuyen. If Department approves line I plan to take with Ely and La Chambre, then it will be necessary for Paris Embassy to send someone, perhaps Achilles or Gibson, immediately to see Bao Dai at Cannes and say to him we are still backing Diem government and Hinh must either effect reconciliation with Diem or leave Vietnam for time with assurances of maintenance, or perhaps even improvement of his rank.

I realize I may not convince Ely and La Chambre of this line, in which case I will have to have strong backing from Department to Paris. I realize also there is certain danger Hinh and his camarilla may refuse this solution and even, although I rather doubt it, attempt *coup d'état*. I think that is risk that is to be run. I am not certain that army would really succeed, or if it did achieve some success, that, faced with dropping of our aid, elements in army would not get rid of Hinh and return to obedience to Diem government. Hinh is not really popular in army except as Diem government's inept handling of him has given him temporary currency and authority, and there is beginning trend of military opinion against his actions and attitude.

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[1] For telegram 1536 from Saigon, also sent to Paris as telegram 505, Oct. 22, see p. 2151.

[2] For Tedul 11 to Paris, Oct. 21, also sent to Saigon as telegram 1663, see p. 2149.

There is also decided possibility (see my telegram sent Paris 505, Department 1536, October 22) that even with whole-hearted complete backing Diem cannot succeed in forming viable government. That is risk, however, I am inclined to take.

If Department approves I think now is time to deliver the President's letter to Diem (Department's telegram 1336, October 1).[3] Do this Embassy and Paris inform Ely and French Government in advance of our intentions to deliver this letter?

Please instruct.

HEATH

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[3] For President Eisenhower's letter to President Diem, see p. 2166. Regarding telegram 1336, see footnote 1, *ibid.*

751G.00/10–2354

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)[1]

TOP SECRET PARIS, October 23, 1954.

Subject: Indochina

Participants: The Secretary
Sir Anthony Eden
Sir Harold Caccia
Mr. Denis Allen
Mr. Merchant

During the meeting of the Secretary with Eden on other subjects reported separately, he took occasion to inform Eden in detail on development our thinking and plans regarding Vietnam. The Secretary told him that he would be happy to have him join him at his meeting later in the day with Mendes-France on this subject. Eden accepted with appreciation and then read a cable from Sir Hubert Graves in Saigon which indicated that he fully shared Heath's deep concern over the existing political situation in South Vietnam but in conclusion plumped for Tam as successor to Diem.[2]

In general Eden expressed full support for our position but the inference seemed clear that the UK is principally concerned with Laos and has little confidence that the position in South Vietnam can be saved.

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[1] This meeting was held at the British Embassy.

[2] The source text is accompanied by a one-page summary, not printed, of the position of Ambassador Graves. A handwritten notation by Merchant on that document states that Eden presented it to Dulles on Oct. 23 and also gave a copy to Premier Mendès-France.

396.1 LO/10-2354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, October 23, 1954—10 p. m.

1717. Repeated information Saigon 217. Saigon for Heath. After signing ceremonies[1] today the Secretary discussed Indochina with Mendes France and Eden;[2] he made specific reference to instructions contained Dept's Tedul 14[3] and agreed to furnish Mendes with a paraphrased copy of instructions in numbered paras 1, 2 and 3 of reftel.

The Secretary admitted that Diem had not displayed the qualities we would have liked but stated that we still thought he was the best man to receive our support and in any case we thought that in order to have a chance Diem must receive 100 percent support from both French and ourselves before we began acting on any alternative solution. The Secretary emphasized that in criticizing the lack of support given by the French to Diem in accordance with Washington understanding, he was not referring to the top authorities but rather to underlings, particularly in Saigon. He reminded Mendes of Senator Mansfield's report and the importance it would have on congressional opinion and decisions regarding further aid to Indochina. He stressed strongly the necessity of forming an effective government of national union which would devote itself to urgent internal problems rather than to petty bickering among its members. He stated that we now believe we must do something to break the deadlock and were prepared to do so in full recognition of the risks involved. Our proposal to have MAAG undertake the training of indigenous forces was made in an effort to accomplish this objective.

Mendes stated that the French believed the Diem Government was weak and were not sure it would accomplish what was necessary. But, Mendes said, they did not have an alternate solution at the moment and were prepared to carry out their part of the Washington agreement to the full until the Diem Government became hopeless. Mendes did not find it surprising that only three months after the armistice the situation was as bad as it was. He believed that we were now in the trough of a wave and could accordingly hope for improvement in the future. In spite of its willingness to support Diem the French Govt believed that we must have some alternate plan in mind to substitute for the Diem formula when and if it failed.

Mendes then announced that the French were accordingly now studying a plan wherein a man would be sent to Indochina to act as the delegate of Bao Dai, "a sort of viceroy." This man would have no powers to interfere in government but would serve the purpose of retaining the prestige of legitimacy which came from Bao Dai and at the same time avoiding the undesirable effect of Bao Dai himself returning to the Vietnam. He described the man's role as similar to that of President Coty or Queen Elizabeth. When we asked who he had in mind he did not reply stating that two or three people were under consideration and that he would have a specific plan to propose to us in the very near future. I asked whether this man would support Diem or not. Mendes replied that he would do neither but would simply preside over a presidium which would take its own decisions. Eden agreed with the possible merit of this suggestion and specifically with the thought that the thread of legitimacy from Bao Dai be retained. The Secretary said that he did not object to sending a man as long as he did not interfere in politics.

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[1] Reference is to the signing of the various agreements on the restoration of sovereignty to the Federal Republic of Germany; for documentation, see volume v.

[2] A memorandum of this conversation, drafted by William M. Gibson, First Secretary of the Embassy in France, is filed in Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, lot 65 D 238.

[3] Dated Oct. 22, p. 2159.

Although Mendes did not mention any names we have no doubt that he was thinking in terms of Buu Hoi or Buu Loc, both of whom appear to fill Mendes' description. I referred to a message we had received today through an intermediary that Bao Dai would like to see us. I asked whether French had any objections our seeing Bao Dai. Mendes replied in the negative stating that it would be best to hear what Bao Dai had to say. Eden expressed willingness his government to do whatever possible could be done to help. Mendes reiterated that Ely and La Chambre were being given specific instructions to carry out loyally the understanding reached at Washington.

Full memorandum of conversation follows by pouch.

DILLON

Presidential Correspondence, lot 66 D 204

President Eisenhower to the President of the Council of Ministers of Vietnam (Ngo Dinh Diem) [1]

WASHINGTON, [undated.]

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I have been following with great interest the course of developments in Viet-Nam, particularly since the conclusion of the conference at Geneva. The implications of the agreement concerning Viet-Nam have caused grave concern regarding the future of a country temporarily divided by an artificial military grouping, weakened by a long and exhausting war and faced with enemies without and by their subversive collaborators within.

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[1] This message, drafted in the Department of State, was sent to the President by Acting Secretary Smith on Sept. 23; for the memorandum of transmittal, see p. 2053. Having been signed by the President, it was transmitted to Saigon in telegram 1336 of Oct. 1, also sent to Paris as 1205. (751G.00/10–154) In telegram 1204 to Paris (1335 to Saigon) of the same date, Ambassador Heath, then in France to meet with Bao Dai, was authorized to use the Presidential letter in any way he deemed best for tactical purposes. (751G.00/9–3054) In telegram 1678 to Saigon, Oct. 22 (Tedul 14 to Paris), Ambassador Heath was instructed to deliver the letter; for Tedul 14, see p. 2159. Heath reported in telegram 1559 from Saigon, Oct. 24, that the letter had been delivered at 7:30 p. m., local time, Oct. 23. (751G.13/10–2454) The text was released by the White House on Oct. 25.

Your recent requests for aid to assist in the formidable project of the movement of several hundred thousand loyal Vietnamese citizens away from areas which are passing under a *de facto* rule and political ideology which they abhor, are being fulfilled. I am glad that the United States is able to assist in this humanitarian effort.

We have been exploring ways and means to permit our aid to Viet-Nam to be more effective and to make a greater contribution to the welfare and stability of the Government of Viet-Nam. I am, accordingly, instructing the American Ambassador to Viet-Nam to examine with you in your capacity as Chief of Government, how an intelligent program of American aid given directly to your Government can serve to assist Viet-Nam in its present hour of trial, provided that your Government is prepared to give assurances as to the standards of performance it would be able to maintain in the event such aid were supplied.

The purpose of this offer is to assist the Government of Viet-Nam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means. The Government of the United States expects that this aid will be met by performance on the part of the Government of Viet-Nam in undertaking needed reforms. It hopes that such aid, combined with your own continuing efforts, will contribute effectively toward an independent Viet-Nam endowed with a strong government. Such a government would, I hope, be so responsive to the nationalist aspirations of its people, so enlightened in purpose and effective in performance, that it will be respected both at home and abroad and discourage any who might wish to impose a foreign ideology on your free people.

Sincerely, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Editorial Note

On October 23, 1954, President Eisenhower addressed a letter to Captain E. E. Hazlett, Jr., USN (ret.), a personal friend with whom he corresponded frequently. The President's letter, responding to a recent communication from Hazlett, dealt with a wide variety of issues and contained the following paragraph concerning Indochina:

"You are somewhat wrong in your statement, 'I know that at one time you contemplated some really drastic action in Indo-China.' What I really attempted to do was to get established in that region the conditions under which I felt the United States could properly intervene to protect its own interests. A proper political foundation for any military action was essential. Since we could not bring it about (though we prodded and argued for almost two years), I gave not even a tentative approval to any plan for massive intervention." (Eisenhower Library, Whitman file, Name Series, Hazlett)

751G.00/10–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT

PARIS, October 24, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 12:09 p. m.]

1718. Repeated information niact Saigon 218. Washington eyes only Acting Secretary; Saigon eyes only Ambassador. Mendes France telephoned me personally after lunch today. He said he was greatly perturbed by news he had just received from La Chambre and Ely.

According to them the text of President's letter to Diem [1] which Heath had shown them before he was to deliver it is clear cut violation of Franco-American agreements reached in Washington by La Chambre. Mendes said that La Chambre and Ely felt situation was so serious that La Chambre had cut short his stay in Indochina and was now en route Paris where he will arrive tomorrow. Mendes asked me to hold myself in readiness to see La Chambre tomorrow. Mendes also said that US action as reported by Ely and La Chambre and as indicated in text of President's letter to Diem went far beyond anything he had understood Secretary to imply in conversation yesterday reported Embtel 1717.[2]

Mendes then specifically asked me to get in touch with Washington immediately to relay his urgent personal request that delivery of letter to Diem be held up until we had chance to discuss matter with La Chambre tomorrow. I told him that I did not know whether or not letter had already been delivered but that I would forward his message immediately and would hold myself ready to see La Chambre any time tomorrow.

Taking into consideration our overall relationship with French resulting from successful conclusion of European negotiations and fact that Mendes feels that contents of letter to Diem go far beyond his understanding of his talk with Secretary last night, I strongly recommend that delivery of letter to Diem be temporarily held up if it has not already taken place.

It also seems that there may be fundamental misunderstanding regarding agreements reached at Washington. Suggest serious consideration be given to sending MacArthur or Robertson to Paris immediately so that matter can be straightened out with La Chambre as promptly as possible. I obviously am in no position to argue with La Chambre about detailed content of agreements which he feels he reached in Washington.

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[1] *Ante*, p. 2166.
[2] Dated Oct. 23, p. 2165.

DILLON

751G.13/10–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, October 24, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received 1 : 56 p. m.]

1560. Repeated information Paris 515. I communicated the substance of Deptel 1678 of October 22 [1] to General Ely yesterday afternoon. Ely was furious at statement that French had not been actively working to consolidate Diem Government. I said very truthfully that that did not apply to him, that I had continuously reported the cooperation and loyalty with which he had personally carried out the Washington understanding in support of Diem Government and that his attitude was well understood in the Department. He then went on to argue that he felt this firming up of our support of Diem was "in disaccord with the accord reached in Washington", which specified that if Diem failed to form a successful government that France and the United States would look for a successor, and respecting latter the name of Buu Loc had been mentioned as a possibility. I said that Washington's attitude was that as long as the deadlock with Hinh and the army continued neither Diem or anyone else could succeed in forming an effective government. Ely said he did not know what more could be done to make Hinh fall in line. I replied that the *modus operandi* was not clear to me but it was very clear that there must either be a reconciliation between Hinh and the Diem Government and the army's subordination to the latter or else Hinh would have to go. Ely said he would think it over and inform Guy Lachambre.

I then went to see Diem and handed him the President's letter and told him that as he saw the United States continued to support his government.

He expressed gratitude for the President's communication. I, of course, did not tell him the lengths that we are prepared to go to support his government, since too much encouragement would, with reason I fear, encourage him in his instinctive tendency to reject any compromise in forming and administering his government. I remarked to him as I had to Ely that there were only two solutions, reconciliation with Hinh or the latter's departure. Regarding this alternative, I observed, there was no practical or safe way to force Hinh to leave immediately. Diem objected that if the French ordered Hinh to go he would leave Vietnam. I said that it would probably be impossible to persuade the French to order him to go and that if the order were given that Hinh would delay or refuse to obey it to save his face. Hinh would argue then he had been given unlimited *congé* to serve Bao Dai and could not leave until the latter released him, and Bao Dai would avoid giving Hinh a definite order which the latter would obey. While the danger of a *coup d'état* was lessened since Ely and I talked strongly with Hinh there was a possibility that his group of extremist officers, if attempt were made suddenly to force Hinh out ignominiously, would prefer to attempt a coup. They would succeed in the attempt or else there would be civil war between disloyal and loyal units and that was something to be definitely avoided. Diem said that he would attempt to find a solution of the Hinh problem and might speak with me today.

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[1] Sent to Paris as telegram Tedul 14, Oct. 22, p. 2159.

We dined with the Elys and the Lachambres last evening. There is no doubt in my mind that both Ely and Lachambre had planned to endeavor to convert me to the thesis that the Diem experiment was at an end and we must look for someone else. After dinner I asked Lachambre if Ely had repeated our conversation of the afternoon and when he said that he had received only a brief résumé I gave him the substance of the Department's 1678. Lachambre took this communication fairly calmly but said he had about come to the conclusion that the Diem experiment would not work. Ely then mentioned that General Soai of the Hoa Haos had seen General Renucci[2] this afternoon to say that the Hoa Haos were dubious whether they should remain in the government and asked Renucci's advise. Renucci reportedly told them to stay in the government. General Phuong of the Cao Dais had seen Ely early evening to say that the Cao Dai's pope was doubtful as to continued Cao Dai participation in the Diem government. I merely stated that no government could succeed without the loyal support of the army; that was something that must be achieved if American aid were to continue. Lachambre hoped there was a possibility of reconciliation between Hinh and Diem and referred to the joint telegram from Washington (Deptel 1298)[3] which mentioned that possibility.

The Lachambres had planned to spend a week in India at Darjeeling before returning to Paris. Lachambre said that Mendes-France had suggested he take a week's rest there. As a result of my communication he cancelled his India trip and left this morning at 6:30 by Air France. He expressed the hope that the Secretary had not left

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[2] Commander of French forces in South Vietnam.
[3] Sent to London as Tosec 9, Sept. 30, p. 2101.

Europe and that he would have a chance to talk with him. Diem and General Hinh were at the airport to see him off and neither spoke to the other.

HEATH

751G.00/10–2454 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 24, 1954—10 : 42 p. m.
PRIORITY

1499. Eyes only Ambassador from Acting Secretary. Re Paris 1718 to Dept rptd 218 Saigon.[2] We sincerely hope there is no real misunderstanding with French over letter to Diem. We have not violated understandings of September 27–29. We have done no more than carry them out in good faith, they are still in full standing, and should so remain. We note Mendes did not specify what he meant by violation. For two months we have conceived of letters to Cambodian and Vietnamese Governments as official US notification of policy on direct aid. After US-French agreements on that policy September 27–29, we have proceeded with implementing steps including first the delivery of these letters. They are the preliminary step on our side to carry out paragraph three the US-French understanding of September 29 re direct aid.

Following are pertinent developments re letter for your use as required.

1. Letter to Vietnamese Prime Minister taken up with French in August here and Paris (Deptel 610 to Paris rptd info Saigon 636 [3] contains Secretary's letter to Mendes).

2. At end first plenary session of US-French talks on September 27 General Smith specifically brought up letters to Cambodia and Vietnam. After referring to his earlier discussion with Bonnet Smith stated letter to Vietnam could go "in view of what we have decided here". LaChambre indicated no objection.[4]

3. Policy direct aid, including military training and assistance, came up several times during talks. French did not object to this policy. Cambodian Ambassador asked for specific confirmation in final plenary on direct US channel to three Associated States on both economic and military aid; Robertson gave it.[5] Final communiqué as

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated priority to Saigon for information as telegram 1703.

[2] Dated Oct. 24, p. 2168.

[3] Dated Aug. 18, p. 1957.

[4] The meeting under reference is summarized in telegram 1138 to Paris, Sept. 28, p. 2082.

[5] The final plenary meeting is summarized in telegram Tosec 7 to London, Sept. 30, p. 2098.

well as minute of understanding confirmed this in writing.[6] In addition minute stated agreed position on supporting Diem and opposing Viet Minh.

4. Accordingly, we have since authorized Heath, and he has requested, to deliver letter so that we could begin carry out agreed policy on direct aid and open discussions both Paris and Saigon on detailed implementing arrangements. Such official notification to Cambodia and Vietnam preliminary prerequisite such implementation as well as important statement to each state on this policy. These efforts could contribute concretely to ameliorate political situation there.

5. We have had official inquiries from both governments re our plans and intentions on direct aid. Further delay in answering Vietnamese, particularly after prior notification to Cambodia, was beginning to be embarrassing.

We want to clarify this matter immediately and satisfactorily with the French, for we feel the September understandings and a common approach remain significant and essential re all three states. It would be unfortunate if there were any "fundamental misunderstanding regarding agreements reached at Washington". We have not been aware of one at the governmental level at least. If there are to be basic changes in French policy on dealing with Ho following Sainteny's talk with LaChambre, or in French views on Free Vietnam such as Mendes and Daridan have intimated, then there may be differences. These may well appear following LaChambre's return.

French Embassy here has no information about his visit or his current views. Neither has Department.

We will see Embassy representative tomorrow. Consideration will be given to sending someone to Paris as required.

Secretary arriving Washington noon Monday.[7]

HOOVER

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[6] For the final communiqué, Sept. 29, see p. 2097. For the minute of understanding, see Tosec 8 to London, Sept. 30, p. 2100.

[7] Oct. 25.

751G.13/10–2554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, October 25, 1954—9 p. m.

1575. Repeated information Paris 2524. This is joint Embassy MAAG telegram. Yesterday afternoon on my instructions General O'Daniel and Embassy officer met with General Hinh. General O'Daniel opened substantive portion of hour long talk by reading to Hinh three points of US policy as set forth in part 1, paragraph 1 of Department telegram 1679.[1] It was explained to Hinh that US desirous assist in all possible ways in Vietnamese effort combat and root out

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[1] Dated Oct. 22, p. 2161.

Viet Minh menace in free Vietnam. However, before any long range program toward this end could be effectively commenced it essential we have assurance of stable Vietnamese Government under Diem leadership with full loyal cooperation Vietnamese Army.

Hinh replied information re US position not news to him, reiterated statement that he no longer interested in politics, that he working loyally with government through Defense Minister (*sic*) in carrying out government's instructions, but that Diem was continuing harass him and would not work with Army as long as he, Hinh, still in command. He alleged that Diem and his entourage, particularly brother Nhu, were responsible for continued distribution of tracts criticizing and belittling both Hinh and Army. He said that in spite of his willingness to cooperate, Diem attitude made such cooperation impossible and that failure government support Army in carrying out its proper role as it was doing its best to do made Army's position next to untenable. Hinh perfectly willing request leave go on mission abroad but only after political situation clarified. In meantime Army under his command doing its best carry out its duties. Hinh himself planning leave in next few days to spend several days in Central Annam coastal and plateau areas to supervise transfer of commands to National Army. He would also visit Haiphong where he would be "last" Vietnamese soldier leaving North Vietnam.

In reply to O'Daniel's direct question whether he would issue statement of support of Diem government he replied after considerable reflection that he would issue statement in support of government but would under no condition mention name of Diem. He alleged full loyalty to Vietnamese Government, to any government which might be in power including anyone which might come in, for example tomorrow.

Hinh dwelt at length on grievances of Army against Diem government, stating that it had not pursued in any way active anti-Communist struggle. He said that at same time funds for Army Intelligence activities have been cut off; Diem government was responsible for dispersing millions of piasters in diversionary and wasteful attempts undermine Army and build up Diem's personal prestige. Specifically he alleged that Diem government financing Cao Dai dissident General The and Hoa Hao Forces while at same time these two forces fighting among themselves for power. He also said Diem was supporting with millions of piasters "assassination" groups in Central Vietnam. He claimed National Army Forces had that morning arrested Vietnamese National Army officer who had on his person instructions attempt subvert Vietnamese Army personnel to join Palace guard and to create other forms of trouble.

In summary Embassy officer received impression Hinh continues to maintain all reservations against Diem although his attitude may have softened to some slight degree. His basic feeling expressed when he stated that if US aid cut off today he would seize Diem the following day and set up military government. He said he realizes necessity US aid but while willing sacrifice himself, his men, and his and their families in anti-Communist struggle he not willing to do so in futile attempt such as he anticipates under Diem leadership. Conversation was concluded by General O'Daniel re-emphasizing US willingness help train Army and give other aid in fight against Viet Minh should acceptable political conditions be created and by Embassy officer again summarizing necessity for [garble] assured within reasonable length of time, possibly a month, of stable government National Union under Diem with loyal Army support and cooperation which condition alone would enable us to establish and carry out long range plan help defeat Viet Minh and strengthen free Vietnam.

Today, following conversation reported above, General O'Daniel saw Hinh who informed him that he would put out statement through Army channels exhorting Army to give support to "present government". In return he would expect Diem to issue instructions that distribution of all tracts against Army be stopped immediately. (Has stated General The, "dissident" Cao Dai leader, is responsible personally for many such tracts). Hinh also said he would like Diem accompany him on inspection tour of pacification operations in two provinces. This would be public demonstration to world of good relations between Army and President of government.[2]

HEATH

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[2] Telegram 1731 to Saigon, Oct. 26, read as follows: "Department finds some encouragement in Hinh's initial reaction. We hope you and O'Daniel will continue seize every opportunity urge moderation and compromise." (751G.13/10–2654) Nonetheless, the Embassy reported on Oct. 29 (telegram 1643) that it had not been possible to induce General Hinh to issue an acceptable statement supporting the government. (751G.00/10–2954)

751G.00/10–2554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, October 25, 1954—noon.

1719. Repeated information Saigon 219. Eyes only Acting Secretary. Saigon eyes only Ambassador. Re Deptel 1499.[1] La Chambre is due at 1:30 this afternoon and will be met by Gibson, who will give him revised final copy of note made during Secretary's conversation with Mendes and Eden.[2] Copy being forwarded Washington by air pouch today.

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[1] Dated Oct. 24, p. 2171.

Mendes was considerably excited when I spoke to him on telephone and stated that he was speaking from information which he had received from Ely and La Chambre. I do not believe he has any clear idea himself of what he meant by violation of France–US understandings of September 27–29, and I gather he was merely repeating language contained in telegrams from Ely and La Chambre, who apparently feel that agreement has been violated.

Based on statements by Mendes during meeting with Secretary on Saturday I feel that misunderstanding is primarily a question of timing and relates to para four of reftel. Mendes during conversation with Secretary stated agreement had been reached in Washington to set up tripartite commissions in each of three Associated States to coordinate distribution of aid and that this decision had not as yet been implemented and should be implemented promptly. I think that French feel that we should have completed arrangements with them for coordination of aid program before delivery of letter to Diem rather than after delivery of letter as is now the case. I feel that this is a primary element of misunderstanding. A secondary element may well be that French seem to feel that a bargain of sorts was struck in Washington by which they agreed to our furnishing military aid directly to Associated States in return for continuation of substantial U.S. support for French Expeditionary Corps. They feel that while U.S. made no commitment on this subject French suggestion was not rejected and its eventual acceptance was implicit in the overall negotiations. They may have felt that U.S. was unable to make specific proposal in September due to the atmosphere resulting from defeat of EDC, but they hoped and probably believed that negotiating regarding U.S. support for Expeditionary Corps should have been started simultaneously with the commencement of the direct aid program to the Associated States.

A rereading of minutes of Washington meetings also leads me to believe that La Chambre may have felt that he had an agreement from us not to proceed with delivery of letter to Diem prior to further consultation with him.

Reftel is very helpful and I hope I will be able on the basis of information contained therein to straighten matter out with La Chambre. I see no reason for Department sending anyone to Paris unless and until I am unsuccessful with La Chambre. Only if he continues to feel that there has been a serious violation of the September understanding would I recommend that Department send someone who participated fully in September negotiations to Paris.

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[2] The meeting under reference, which occurred on Saturday, Oct. 23, is summarized in Paris telegram 1717 of that date, p. 2165.

FonOff has just made tentative appointment for me to see La Chambre at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

DILLON

751G.13/10–2554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, October 25, 1954—11 p. m.

1737. Repeated information Saigon 224. Reference A—Tedul 14, rptd Saigon 1678.[2] Reference B—Deptel 1177, rptd Saigon 1298.[3] Reference C—Deptel 1195, rptd Saigon 1327.[4] I went to see La Chambre this afternoon at 4:30. When I arrived I found Parodi with him. The conversation lasted two and a half hours, 90 percent of which was taken up by La Chambre. He was obviously upset when conversation began.

Overall French position which I will develop in detail later on appears as follows:

They consider that statement in first para of Reference A that "French have not been actively working to consolidate Diem govt" is untrue and is direct personal reflection on both La Chambre and Ely, and on honor of French govt. This sentence was quoted verbatim in the telegram from La Chambre in Saigon to Mendes that caused him to telephone me on Sunday.[5] French further believe that U.S. seems to be relying on this inaccurate statement to break the agreement reached in Washington last Sept. Specifically they consider (2) (*b*) of Ref A to be diametrically opposed to the agreements reached in Wash. While French fully agree that channel for U.S. aid shld be direct to Associated States they consider that firm decision was reached in Wash that tripartite comites shld be set up in each of the three Associated States which shld decide what form French and American aid shld take and how it shld be divided. French rely for this understanding on General Smith's statements. La Chambre states there was some division of opinion in American delegation when this subject was discussed and that Robertson seemed opposed to the creation of such tripartite boards but that General Smith had made final decision that they shld be created. (*Emb comment:* In this connection last paragraph of page 4 of top secret memorandum of conversation (ELaC

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in three parts.

[2] Dated Oct. 22, p. 2159.

[3] Also sent as Tosec 9, Sept. 30, p. 2101.

[4] Dated Oct. 1, p. 2110.

[5] Regarding the telephone call from Mendès-France to Dillon on Sunday, Oct. 24, see Paris telegram 1718 of that date, p. 2168.

MC–2) covering Smith La Chambre meeting Sept 29 seems relevant.)[6] As an example of the decision regarding the establishment of tripartite comites, La Chambre said that Bedell Smith had even discussed the chairmanship of these comites and had said that of course a Frenchman shld be chairman of the comites in Vietnam and in Laos, but that he wld expect an American to be chairman of the comite in Cambodia.

La Chambre also pointed out that unilateral direct military aid by U.S. wld create grave difficulties for French under the Armistice Agreement signed at Geneva. France, he pointed out, is a guarantor of this agreement and must be fully and currently informed both of any imports of matériel and of any changes of personnel. La Chambre understood that personnel changes wld be required in MAAG Saigon to enable it to undertake a training mission. These wld have to be handled with great care in order that France cld avoid a charge of breaking the terms of the armistice.

La Chambre indicated repeatedly that he felt he had arrived at complete understanding with General Smith and he stated he felt present situation wld never have arisen if General Smith had still been present in Dept. By end of conversation La Chambre and Parodi seemed more relaxed and it was agreed that [*when*] we broke up that (1) I wld forward to Wash on behalf of Mendes-France the formal and emphatic protest of the French govt against allegation that French had not actively worked to consolidate Diem govt; and (2) query Wash as to whether understanding which La Chambre reached with General Smith that tripartite or "combined" groups wld be set up to coordinate and oversee distribution of aid still held good.

In connection with French protest Parodi also stated that French govt considers that it is surprising and disturbing that U.S. govt shld take such a grave decision at a time when the Secretary of State was absent in Paris discussing other vitally important matters concerning Europe with the French Prime Min.

La Chambre asked if we cld furnish him with a copy of all memos of conversation regarding his talks in Wash. as French had no such record. I told him I wld request permission from Wash and I recommend that I be authorized to give him a set as soon as possible. If Dept approves, please send extra set soonest.

Detailed account follows:

Meeting commenced by my showing La Chambre bulk of Deptel 1499[7] indicating that U.S. had no intention of departing from Sept agreements. I did not show him final paragraphs of this telegram. La

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[6] Regarding the meeting under reference, see telegram Tosec 7 to London, Sept. 30, p. 2098.

[7] Dated Oct. 24, p. 2171.

Chambre then showed me and went over with me in detail the telegram which he and Ely had jointly sent to Mendes-France and which provoked Mendes-France's telephone call to me. In this telegram La Chambre and Ely protested vigorously against wording in Ref A, "French have not been actively working to consolidate Diem govt."

La Chambre said that this had very much upset both him and Ely. This had been somewhat rectified regarding Ely by Secretary's statements to Mendes, but omission of La Chambre in this connection had made him all the more upset. According to La Chambre, Ely was personally and solely responsible for preventing Hinh from taking armed action against Diem. La Chambre said that he personally also had worked as hard as he could to solve crisis in Vietnam and to strengthen Diem govt. He said that he himself had persuaded Bai Vien to agree to see Diem and to enter Diem govt. He also said he personally had persuaded General Hinh to agree to compromise with Diem provided Diem accepted Xuan as Min of Defense to protect the interests of the army. La Chambre said all this was done in closest cooperation with Heath and that Heath then carried out a comparable task with Diem. In this connection Heath had been successful in persuading Diem to accept Xuan.[8]

Only reason for continuation of crisis in La Chambre's eyes has been stubbornness of Diem in not agreeing to accept Xuan as Min of Defense. La Chambre said Diem's reason for refusing Xuan was not that he disliked him but that he wanted to force Hinh out. What Diem wishes, according to La Chambre, is to have French remove Hinh from his command and order him out of Vietnam. This, according to La Chambre, the French could never do. La Chambre said that Ely feels that such an action would be likely to cause a civil war, which would be the final end for Vietnam. La Chambre said that if such a situation arose we should understand clearly that in no event would the French Expeditionary Corps intervene and take action against Vietnamese forces. The French were willing to fight Communists but no one else.

La Chambre said that he had seen Diem several times and had had three or four meals with him. He said that he and Ely feel very strongly that they have both done their best and he said that Heath, when delivering the message in Ref A to both of them, agreed fully with their feeling that they had each done everything possible to cooperate with the U.S. in supporting Diem.

Regarding Secretary's statement to Mendes that Ref A referred to some lower level French, La Chambre requested that US back up this assertion by citing names and facts. He stated that if we could prove that any French official had disobeyed his and Ely's orders to carry out agreements reached at Washington to support Diem govt, French would instantly discharge such official. La Chambre closed this part of the discussion by saying "I gave General Smith my word and—I don't break my word".

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[8] Telegram 1744 from Paris, Oct. 26, read as follows: "Reference Embassy telegram 1737. Last sentence of second paragraph in detailed account should read 'Heath had been successful in persuading Diem to accept Bay Vien but had not been successful in case of Xuan.' " (751G.13/10–2654)

Telegram from La Chambre and Ely to Mendes then went on to say "the decision to unilaterally notify Diem of the unconditional grant of aid seems to us to be contrary to the accords of Washington". La Chambre emphasized that the key word in this paragraph was the word "unconditional". The telegram then quoted at length from Ref B which La Chambre relied on almost entirely as expression of agreement reached in Washington as he had no minutes of proceedings. From Ref B French gathered understanding as follows:

1. Support should be given to Diem to facilitate the construction of a strong govt by him and not merely for the purpose of prolonging the crisis.
2. With respect to General Hinh a reconciliation should be sought between Hinh and Diem but this did not mean that Diem should be authorized to force the resignation of Hinh. Paragraph 5, and in particular last sentence, is interpreted as indicating that Hinh should stay on as Chief of Staff although he should cease to meddle in politics.
3. Sentence in paragraph 5 reading "it should be emphasized that France and US are firmly supporting President Diem and that once his position consolidated and only then, extensive program designed to develop national army under General Hinh could be undertaken" is interpreted by French to mean that aid for national army can not be given until political crisis is settled. They consider that item in Ref A regarding initiation of immediate training program by MAAG Saigon is flat contradiction of this agreement.

La Chambre then stated that his discussions with General Smith covered the possibility of an alternative solution if despite all help given him Diem should fail. La Chambre said that alternative solution he discussed with General Smith along lines of that proposed by Mendes-France in his talk with Secretary. La Chambre stated categorically that General Smith agreed that such an alternative position should be prepared but that it should be kept in reserve so that full support could be given to Diem in the first instance. Reference C apparently refers to this conversation. La Chambre stated that in view of this fact he felt that paragraph (3) of Ref A and in particular the last sentence thereof was not in accord with the understanding he had reached on this subject with General Smith.

La Chambre then said that he felt that the unilateral action taken by the U.S. runs the risk of breaking the close Franco-American teamwork which had been established between Heath and Ely and would probably only serve to prolong the crisis.

La Chambre reported a conversation he had had with Phuong, the head of the Cao Dai. This conversation took place in Saigon on Saturday a half hour before Heath informed Ely of the contents of Ref A. Phuong in this conversation said that much as he personally disliked Hinh he thought that the crisis had now lasted long enough, that its prolongation was due solely to Diem's stubbornness and that if Diem did not promptly come to terms with Hinh the time had come for Diem to go. When La Chambre asked Phuong whom he thought of as a successor, he said that no previous prime minister would do, that a new man was required, and that the time had now come for Diem to compromise with Hinh or to resign.

Finally La Chambre said that the situation throughout Vietnam is very bad and that outside of the major population centers the entire country is slipping into the hands of the Viet Minh. The Diem govt is in complete disrepute everywhere and is no longer supported even by the Catholics. The Bishop of Hue and the Bishop of Saigon have both told La Chambre that they now are opposed to Diem, as they feel that what is needed above all is an efficient govt which he has shown that he cannot provide. La Chambre said that most popular person in Vietnam as the moment was Buu Hoi because he was not well known. La Chambre said that he personally was worried by Buu Hoi's leftist tendencies which are not far distant from Communism. If Buu Hoi was to preside over a govt he would need strong men under him to run matters, such as Tam or Bai Vien. La Chambre said that although Bai Vien was a gangster, he was a strong man and apparently was showing signs of wanting to reform. La Chambre said that he personally believes that by far the best bet for restoring order in Vietnam is Tam as Minister of Interior. He described him as a strong career policeman which he said was what was needed. He said that Tam would willingly work for Diem. However, much as they feel he is needed, French would not dare suggest him because of his pro-French reputation.

La Chambre then made solemn statement of following French governmental position which was confirmed by Parodi. "We prefer to lose in Vietnam with the U.S. rather than to win without them. We would rather support Diem knowing he is going to lose and thus keep France–U.S. solidarity than to pick someone who could retain Vietnam for the free world if this meant breaking Franco–US solidarity".

La Chambre also expressed some concern at Secretary's description to Mendes of U.S. policy regarding size of army in Vietnam. La Chambre said that he agreed personally Secretary's ideas that a constabulary or a small force would be far more useful than a ten division army. However, La Chambre pointed out that this was primarily Ely's responsibility and as far as he knew, no one on the U.S. side had informed Ely as yet of this new American policy. He hoped that this would be done as soon as possible.

In closing, La Chambre praised the teamwork that had evolved between Ely and Heath in Saigon and expressed the hope that the present differences could be promptly settled so that they could get on again with the job.

I made very little comment during this long exposé by La Chambre except to say at the end that I was certain that U.S. still desired to coordinate their aid programs closely with the French and the Associated State concerned. La Chambre said that if this was indeed the case the French would be satisfied but that then it would be necessary to implement this decision by proceeding very promptly to set up the tripartite committees which were agreed upon in Washington.

If the Dept does not consider that agreement was reached to set up such committees, I am afraid that this constitutes a basic misunderstanding such as I referred to in my telegram reporting my conversation with Mendes-France. In that event I would recommend that Dept promptly send someone who took part in the September talks to Paris to clear up the misunderstanding.

DILLON

751G.00/10-2554

Memorandum of Conversation, by Paul J. Sturm of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] October 25, 1954.

Subject: Call of Mr. Pierre Millet on Mr. Young

Participants: Mr. Pierre Millet, Counselor, French Embassy
Mr. Kenneth T. Young, Jr., PSA
Mr. P. J. Sturm, PSA

Mr. Pierre Millet called on Mr. Young October 25 at the latter's request to receive a copy, and brief oral exposition, of the President's letter to Prime Minister Diem.

During the course of the conversation Millet referred to Premier Mendes-France's visit to Washington scheduled for November 18 and expressed the hope that it would be possible by then to have answers to outstanding questions, such as U.S. support for the FEC, concerning which Governor Stassen had told Mr. La Chambre he would have to consult Congress. Mr. Young replied that these questions are now under study. Our military will be interested in French plans to reduce the FEC. We are concerned with support and training to be given the armed forces of Viet-Nam and Cambodia. In this connection, MAAG Saigon has been authorized to begin a limited training program for the Vietnamese National Army. Our objective is to induce General

Hinh to get out of politics and give his attention to organizing the Army to resist Viet Minh infiltration and subversion. The Secretary advised Premier Mendes-France in Paris of this decision.

Mr. Young said that we still think Diem is the best symbol available to head a government in Viet-Nam. All efforts must be bent to surrounding him with an efficient team.

Mr. Millet said the French Embassy was annoyed by press stories (he mentioned *Newsweek*) that the French had been encouraging Hinh to carry out a military coup. Mr. Young replied that we were satisfied with General Ely's performance but wondered if his directives had been faithfully executed at lower levels.

Millet asked whether we thought the Mansfield report went "too far". Mr. Young replied that the report would carry weight in Congress, and that if it could be shown Prime Minister Diem, owing to military intrigues against him, never had a chance to build up an effective government, reactions in our Congress would be adverse. We have noted that La Chambre seems preoccupied with seeking a successor for Diem.

Millet remarked that for his part he was concerned with finding an efficient head of government and that he attached less importance to the qualities of honesty and incorruptibility attributed to Diem. He did say that a Vietnamese Prime Minister to be successful must be a nationalist patriot; it is asking too much to require him to be honest also.

Millet said that there is no use pretending or hoping that elections will not take place in Viet-Nam in 1956. The Viet Minh would recommence the war if a serious attempt were made to prevent elections.

Mr. Young ended the conversation by saying that we are earnestly trying to carry out the terms of the September 29 Minute of Understanding.

751G.00/10–2554

Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] October 25, 1954.

Subject: French Proposal to Set Up "Viceroy" in Saigon

Paris telegram 1717[2] reports your conversation of October 23 with Mendes-France on the Diem government. Mendes said the French were studying a plan to send someone to Saigon to act as "a sort of viceroy" for Bao Dai. This individual, according to Mendes, would neither support nor act against Diem, but "would preside over a presidium which would take its own decisions". While Mendes did not mention any names, the Embassy has no doubt that the French are thinking of Buu Loc or Buu Hoi. La Chambre pressed for Buu Loc during the Washington talks in September.

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[1] Drafted by Young and Sturm of PSA.

[2] Dated Oct. 23, p. 2165.

We are concerned to know what type of "decisions" this presidium would take. If it did not actively intervene in the government, it could only observe and make recommendations to Diem, Bao Dai, the French and/or the U.S. Although Mendes said this "viceroy" would have no authority to interfere in government, we can see no way which he could play any part in Saigon, useful or otherwise, unless he did interfere.

With regard to the personalities who may be involved, Buu Loc and Buu Hoi, we have serious reservations. Buu Loc already has a record of failure as Prime Minister of Viet-Nam. While not a French citizen, he has spent most of his adult life in France. He has neither political appeal nor adroitness, and is said to have made a very good thing financially of his post as Vietnamese High Commissioner in Paris. At the time he became Prime Minister, it was generally agreed that his two assets for the job were that he was politically neuter and that it would be understood he was functioning as a stand-in for Bao Dai.

Buu Hoi has never held office. He is one of Bao Dai's innumerable cousins, of the same generation as Buu Loc. He has some scientific pretensions and has been associated in France with Joliot-Curie.[3] He is said also to have served as a go-between for Bao Dai with the Viet-Minh. If he played any part in Vietnamese politics, his efforts would probably be directed to seeking a *modus vivendi* with the Viet Minh.

Our feeling is that at the present time a "viceroy" in Saigon would only complicate matters in the sense of further weakening Diem's authority, unless he did nothing at all, in which case his being there would be pointless. We think we should hew fast to the present policy of supporting Diem and try to form a government of national union *around* him. We should discourage any effort to confuse that issue or further attenuate such authority as he has.

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[3] Frédéric Joliot-Curie, French atomic scientist; High Commissioner for Atomic Energy, 1946–1950; Communist.

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum of Discussion at the 219th Meeting of the National Security Council, Tuesday, October 26, 1954[1]

[Extracts]

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

Present at the 219th Meeting of the National Security Council were the following: The President of the United States, presiding; Herbert

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[1] Prepared by Deputy Executive Secretary Gleason on Oct. 27.

Hoover, Jr., for the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Acting Director, Foreign Operations Administration;[2] and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; William F. Tompkins for the Attorney General (Item 3); the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (Items 1 and 3); the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers; the Director, U.S. Information Agency; the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; Assistant Secretary of Defense Pike; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; the Chief of Naval Operations; the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force; General Pate for the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

. . . .

2. *Indochina* (NSC Action No. 1250-*d*)[3]

Mr. Cutler reminded the Council of its agreement at its last meeting to inaugurate a crash military program in South Vietnam (NSC Action No. 1250) as set forth in a draft message which was to be prepared for transmission to the Ambassador and to the Chief of the MAAG, Saigon. He then asked Under Secretary Hoover to report on the follow-up of this Council decision.

Secretary Hoover said that the message in question had been sent that evening to Saigon, as had a message to the Secretary of State in Paris.[4] The Secretary had discussed with Premier Mendes-France the proposed crash program,[5] and had got a delayed but very violent adverse reaction. The French contended that we had violated not only our recent agreements with the French themselves in the Washington conversations on Indochina, but that our proposals also violated the terms of the Geneva Armistice Agreement with the Communists. From this reaction, Secretary Dulles felt that the French were probably being put on the spot because they had made some sort of secret agreement with the Vietminh in the course of the Geneva Conference. There was no proof of any such agreement, said Secretary Hoover, but we have certainly not violated the terms of the Geneva Armistice

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[2] Glen A. Lloyd, Deputy to the Director.

[3] NSC Action No. 1250 is included in extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 218th Meeting of the Council, Oct. 22, p. 2153.

[4] See telegrams 1679 to Saigon and Tedul 14 to Paris, Oct. 22, pp. 2161 and 2159, respectively.

[5] See telegram 1717 from Paris, Oct. 23, p. 2165.

Agreement as we know those terms. In any event, we are going ahead with our plans vis-à-vis Diem and Hinh, and Secretary Hoover believed the situation in South Vietnam now looked a good deal better.

The President inquired whether the French irritation was simply the result of the fact that we were cutting down on our cash handouts to them. Secretary Hoover replied that there seemed to be more to it than that, and again suggested the possibility of a secret agreement between the French and the Communists at Geneva, in which the British also may have been implicated.

The President reacted strongly to this latter suggestion, and said that if there were any question about British participation, Secretary Dulles should confront Eden and get the "lowdown", or, if the Secretary preferred, he himself would take the matter up with Sir Winston Churchill and would do so in his own fashion.

Secretary Humphrey speculated as to the possibility that the French were trying to reconvert what was left of free Indochina into a French colony. Admiral Radford pointed out that the British had also protested the creation of a USMAAG for Cambodia, despite the fact that we had every right to do this according to the terms of the Geneva Agreement.

Mr. Allen Dulles thought it likely that the French wanted to concentrate their hopes and their powers on preserving Cochin China as a French colony, having more or less renounced any hope of holding Annam. The Acting Director of FOA, Mr. Lloyd, cited the fact that the United States had spent $231 million on Indochina and that $554 million earmarked for carrying out the Navarre Plan remained unspent. He thought this fact had strongly influenced the French. The President replied with some heat that these large sums had not been offered the French in order to enable them to carry out a colonization project, but to assist them in fighting a war. Whatever the explanation of the French conduct, the President added that he wished to be kept informed of developments in this area, especially in the event that our allies are again dragging in colonialism.

Secretary Wilson said that in his view the only sensible course of action was for the U.S. to get out of Indochina completely and as soon as possible. The situation there was utterly hopeless, and these people should be left to stew in their own juice. The President replied by pointing out to Secretary Wilson that what we were doing in Indochina was being done for our own purposes and not for the French. If we continued to retreat in this area the process would lead to a grave situation from the point of view of our national security. Accordingly, the President expressed a preference for Admiral Radford's earlier view that we should try to get the French out of the Indochina area. To the President's point Secretary Wilson replied that if we had ever been in control of Indochina, as we had once been in the Philippines, he would feel differently about it. As matters stood, however, he could see nothing but grief in store for us if we remained in this area.

Mr. Cutler asked Secretary Wilson directly whether he was proposing that the Council reverse the action which it had agreed to recommend to the President only five days ago. Secretary Wilson replied in the negative, but pointed out that the earlier policy had been adopted by the Council on the assumption that the United States would have French and British support which, in point of fact, we did not now appear to have.

. . . .

The National Security Council:

a. Noted an oral report by the Under Secretary of State on developments pursuant to NSC Action No. 1250–*d.*

b. Requested the Secretary of State to keep the Council informed on further developments pursuant to NSC Action No. 1250–*d.*

Note: The action in *b* above subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State.

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751G.00/10–2654

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Western European Affairs (Tyler)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] October 26, 1954.

Subject: Indochina.

Participants: The Secretary
The French Ambassador
Mr. Tyler, WE

Ambassador Bonnet called on the Secretary at his own request. He said that he had not been instructed to make a *démarche* but had come on his own initiative to express his misgivings and deep anxiety with regard to the course of events in Indochina. He said that the information he had received officially, and in personal communications from General Ely, led him to feel that the chances of Diem succeeding in forming a government of national unity and of acquiring authority were very slight.

He said that General Ely, in whom he had unbounded confidence, had done everything he could to bring about a settlement of the Diem–Hinh quarrel. He had succeeded in obtaining from Hinh the undertaking that he would limit himself entirely to military affairs and would stay away from politics. He had brought Hinh to the point where he had agreed that he would take orders from Diem. However Diem had on his part been adamant and is insisting on getting rid of Hinh. This deadlock has created a dangerous situation in which some of the younger officers behind Hinh are beginning to agitate to the point where the possibility of civil disorder cannot be excluded. Should this happen, the French Expeditionary Force would in no circumstances go into action against Vietnamese troops but would only look toward its own security.

The Ambassador commented in a rueful tone that "France now had *everyone* against her in Indochina." He said that the President's letter to Diem had created a sensation in Saigon and was being interpreted as superseding the Washington agreements, by which Ambassador Heath need no longer consider himself bound. It was felt that the President's letter had given Diem full rein without requiring of him as a preliminary condition that he should first succeed in forming a strong and stable government, even though this preliminary condition had been part of the basis of the Washington agreements.

A further aspect of the President's letter which is giving the French concern is the use which the Viet Minh could make of this step in relation to the Armistice agreement. The Ambassador said that the Viet Minh would doubtless wish to exploit this possibility, especially if the situation were to deteriorate further. In addition to the French Expeditionary Force now located in Southern Viet Nam, there was the matter of the troops in Haiphong, which were not to be evacuated until May 1955. All this added up to a very delicate situation, potentially dangerous and of uncertain prospects. The Ambassador said that in all good faith, and despite the best will in the world to make the Diem experiment work, the outlook seemed to be deteriorating rapidly. He was also concerned by what seemed to him to be a lack of Franco-American coordination with regard to the course of action to be taken in Indochina and said he hoped it would be possible for us to consult each other again more closely, and bring our positions together.

The Secretary said that he was giving the situation in Indochina the greatest attention, and he agreed that it was a difficult and delicate problem. He pointed out that Diem needed all the support that he could get from every quarter and that it was not enough to say that one was going to support Diem but that he hadn't much chance. The support must be positive and continuous in order to be effective. The Secretary said that he had had a talk with Premier Mendes-France in Paris on Indochina and that he would shortly be sending him a message about the situation there.

751G.00/10–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, October 27, 1954—10 p. m.

1609. Rptd info Paris 536, Department pass Defense. This is joint Embassy MAAG message in which all members country team concur. Re Department's 1678[2] and 1679.[3] There follows proposed crash program designed implement directions contained reference telegrams. This program is based on three yet untested assumptions:

(1) That Diem can be persuaded to accept these proposals; (2) that Hinh will actually carry out his assurances of loyal behavior to General O'Daniel reported Embassy telegram 1575;[4] and (3) that French cooperation will be in fact as well as name and extend through all echelons.

I. *Kick-off:*

We envisage kick-off of crash program to consist of two statements:

(1) Statement by Diem against communism, outlining general program designed strengthen country in common fight in which all forces of nation, including army, have roles to play. Army would be assured that its development would be fostered, its integrity preserved and its legitimate military rights protected.

(2) Hinh declaration of loyalty of army to present legal government.

Timing these statements still to be worked out, but, in view Hinh conversation with O'Daniel (Embtel 1575), it is possible Hinh's statement may precede that of President. Both have stated to O'Daniel that proposed statement by Hinh should be made first.

Immediate implementation of Hinh's declaration of loyalty should be joint investigation (see [III] C below) of Nha Trang affair in which it is alleged that armed forces took over civil government. Disciplinary action and restoration of civil government as may be necessary.

II. *Diem:*

(A) House clean presidential office.

(B) Persuade to bring into Cabinet capable individuals, such as Quat, possibly as Secretaries of State attached to Presidency or Ministers without portfolio with longer range purpose of reorganizing Cabinet to retain these individuals, eliminating incompetent and corrupt members, and reducing relative representation of the sects. Indication that US may be willing take over subsidy of sect would be weapon.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] Also sent as Tedul 14, Oct. 22, p. 2159.

[3] Dated Oct. 22, p. 2161.

[4] Dated Oct. 25, p. 2172.

(C) Concrete steps must be taken in direction of solving most pressing problems.

(1) Reestablishment security and effective local government throughout free Vietnam. Presidential directives mentioned III B to be issued by November 8.
(2) General statement re land reform program.

(D) Diem must be persuaded to dismiss ultimately present Cao Dai and Hoa Hao Secretaries of State, Interior Ministry and appoint immediately an effective, capable energetic Minister of Interior.

(E) Diem must get out of Palace and among people, including inspection tours of Armed Forces. First these tours prior mid-November.

(F) Coordinated and effective publicity campaign on large scale through Vietnamese Information Ministry with support and advice from USIS and other appropriate US agencies. Since present Information Minister is Cao Dai, there will have to be safeguards to prevent this program from becoming Cao Dai aggrandizement campaign.

III. *General Hinh and Army:*

(A) Government and Hinh accept, with Ely's concurrence by November 1 presence of American officers in headquarters with view to establishing and extending American influence in Army. We visualize immediate introduction three MAAG officers into headquarters staff Vietnamese Armed Forces, one MAAG officer into Defense Ministry and one MAAG officer in each of three Vietnamese Regional Military Headquarters.

(B) Actions by Armed Forces in pacification program: Based on directives from President, Army prepared and issues by target date November 15 detailed instructions concerning

(1) Chain of command for pacification operations
(2) Allocation of forces for pacification duty
(3) Schedule of developments required to carry out pacification program
(4) Relationship between military forces and Gamos
(5) Earmarking and training forces to be used in pacifying areas yet to be evacuated by Vietminh
(6) Methods to be employed in conducting pacification operations.

Primary emphasis will be addressed to exemplary conduct of troops and thorough system of screening, registration and follow-up checks on all centers of population. Appropriate inspection of selected pacification operations by US officials.

(C) After Nha Trang Affair has been investigated and corrective measures as may prove necessary have been taken, General Hinh should issue general directive prohibiting members of Armed Forces from engaging in political activities. French and MAAG officers to accompany investigating committee composed of representatives of Ministry of Interior, Minister of Defense and Vietnamese Armed Forces.

(D) Obtain agreements from Hinh and Ely that French Officers holding key posts in Vietnamese Armed Services will be gradually supplanted by Vietnamese Officers. French Officers to remain as advisers. Initial group French Officers to be replaced by December 1.

IV. *Three Generals:*

Negotiations between Diem and Generals Xuan, Hinh and Bay Vien, who were basing their claims on Bao Dai telegrams, should cease. Bao Dai must be persuaded to support our program and refrain from encouraging generals in their demands.

(A) Xuan is definitely out and we will oppose his being brought into government in any capacity.

(B) Bay Vien's control of police makes it temporarily desirable that he be brought into government on conditions acceptable to Diem and his colleagues. However, Bay Vien should under no circumstances be given Ministry of Interior or key post therein.

V. *French:*

(A) Ely must be kept informed of crash program activities and his advice, cooperation and support solicited and geared into program.

(B) Ely must be persuaded to police more effectively his subordinates and although it is realized that legalistic substantiation of charges might be impossible we must name names if necessary. Continued tacit encouragement of opposition to Diem on part subordinate French officials should be grounds for US request to French Government for their removal. Possibly a request should be made for the transfer of General Renucci.

VI. Details concerning implementation MAAG part this crash program will be subject separate cable.[5] Progress reports will include suggested modifications as may be indicated by situation as it develops.

HEATH

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[5] Telegram MG 3381–A from Saigon, Oct. 27, not printed. (751G.00/10–2754)

751G.00/10–2754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, October 27, 1954—9 p. m.
[Received October 28—4 : 48 a. m.]

1611. Repeated information Paris 537. I had long talk with Frederic-Dupont here with French Parliamentary Mission who was named Minister of Associated States toward end of Laniel-Bidault regime and attended several sessions of Geneva conference.

Frederic-Dupont criticized results of Geneva conference. He asserted that on June 10 Viet Minh delegation had approached him and had offered better solution in that they had agreed to internationalization of port of Haiphong and had indicated they would accept line of demarcation north of 17th parallel and that they would not insist on national elections.

Insistence on national elections was worst feature of armistice since population above 17th parallel was greater than that below and even if South Vietnam voted 100 percent against Viet Minh, latter would win election.

Further both Mendes-France in debate in Assembly and La Chambre in hearing before Parliamentary Commission had stated flatly to him that French policy was to insist on these elections and to abide by their results. La Chambre had stated in committee that if Viet Minh Government received majority of only one vote France would accept result and let Viet Minh take over all Vietnam.

I remarked that the armistice and its national election provision were not binding on South Vietnam which was not signatory of Geneva accord. Furthermore, we were not a signatory and had made specific reservation that nationwide elections would be acceptable only under supervision of United Nations.

Frederic-Dupont said we should do everything to get publicity for our attitude and interpretation on election issue. In short time he had been here he had found one of greatest obstacles to any real commitment to cause of free Vietnam and support of Diem government was general belief here that nationwide elections would be held in 1956 and would be lost to Viet Minh. Furthermore, there should be repeated and widely publicized official statements that United States intended to see that free Vietnam would remain free. Frankly, he said Vietnamese people looked to United States and not to French Expeditionary Corps to protect them.

Regarding Diem government, he said it was certainly not efficient one, but he thought our attitude in supporting it was right because there was no acceptable successor in sight. Latter's reputation for honesty was valuable asset.

HEATH

751G.5 MSP/10-2854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, October 28, 1954—2 p. m.

1795. Repeated information Saigon 230, Bangkok 8, New Delhi 14, London 492, Vientiane 12. Limit distribution. Foreign Office handed us this morning four *aide-mémoires* all dated October 26 on subjects raised by Mendes-France in his conversation with the Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden and Ambassador Dillon October 23. Foreign Office stated positions taken in *aide-mémoires* had been approved by Mendes and that similar *aide-mémoires* delivered British.

Summary outline four *aide-mémoires* follows, free translation texts of which being incorporated succeeding telegram:[1]

(1) French Government desires associate British in coordination French-US economic and technical assistance programs to three IC States and suggests that liaison be established in each of three capitals IC States between local British representative and tripartite committees (French-US and IC State concerned) agreed upon at Washington to assure coordination French-US economic and technical assistance programs with each of the IC States.

(2) French Government desires obtain support US and British Governments for French membership Colombo plan. *Aide-mémoire* points out France should participate Colombo plan in view relationship between Manila pact and Colombo plan in order better coordinate such Colombo plan aid as might be forthcoming for IC States. *Aide-mémoire* adds that presence India ICC and recent settlement French Indian establishment problem should modify Indian opposition manifested 1950 to French membership Colombo plan.

(3) Government underlines desirability in view precarious political situation Laos, with particular reference provinces Phong Saly and Sam Neua, of US satisfying as soon possible General Ely's recent request to MAAG Saigon for temporary loan aircraft (six Beavers and six helicopters) to ICC with principal view enabling latter carry out effectively its functions Laos.

(4) French Government states collusion between Communist Pathet Lao and dissident Lao movement directed from Thailand by Prince Petsarath (which responsible for assassination Lao Defense Minister) appears to be established, and calls for tripartite (French-British) approach to Thailand Government. Bangkok in effort persuade latter government put an end to activities in Thailand of Prince Petsarath and his accomplices. French Government also underlines desirability French-US-British approaching Lao Government Vientiane in effort try convince Lao Government of necessity strengthening its efforts directed against all subversive elements Laos.

DILLON

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[1] The free translation was sent to Washington in telegram 1800, Oct. 28. (751G.5 MSP/10-2854) Copies of the French texts of the four *Aide-Mémoires* were transmitted in despatch 877 from Paris, Oct. 29. (751G.5 MSP/10-2954)

751G.13/10-2554 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, October 29, 1954—2:28 p. m.
PRIORITY

1565. For Ambassador from Secretary. Reference my talk with Mendes-France and Eden Oct 23 and your 1737 rptd Saigon 224[2] please deliver following message from me to Mendes-France:

Begin text:

"I was very glad to have had a useful talk with you on Indochina. On my return I have consulted again with my advisers on this complex and disturbing situation. I am fully aware of risks involved and difficulties in finding practicable clear-cut solutions. I also remain convinced of the need for effective action by both our govts to break the dangerous stalemate in Saigon and to consolidate a govt of national union around Diem.

"Ambassador Dillon has reported his conversations with you and with M. la Chambre and M. Parodi. I assure you that none of us on our side has had the slightest idea of questioning the good faith of the French Govt with regard to carrying out our agreed policies in Indochina. In particular we appreciate the efforts which M. la Chambre and General Ely, in consultation with Ambassador Heath, have made during past few weeks. On other hand, many French officials have not concealed their belief that Diem has failed, creating an impasse in Saigon, and that he should be replaced. It was apparently a statement of our recognition of existence these views that has troubled M. la Chambre and Gen Ely.

"It was precisely to attempt to resolve political impasse Saigon by giving Diem increased possibilities of consolidating a govt that we instructed Amb Heath to deliver President's letter at this time. We considered our action as being in furtherance of the understandings reached at Washington and, specifically, in support of the efforts made by M. la Chambre and Gen Ely, together with Amb Heath, to consolidate the Diem Govt. Our actions are designed to stimulate Vietnamese Govt under Diem, and particularly the Vietnamese military organization, to concentrate on imperative tasks that require urgent Vietnamese attention. We would like to help provide a broadened outlet for constructive actions by Vietnamese civil and military authorities.

"Our instructions to Amb Heath on Oct 22,[3] which are quoted below, should generally reassure you concerning various points that have been raised:

> 'US Ambassador is requested to undertake necessary discussions and negotiations with Govt of Free Vietnam and local French authorities to obtain agreements (*a*) ensuring US MAAG

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[1] Drafted by Tyler of WE and Young of PSA. Repeated to Saigon as telegram 1775.

[2] Dated Oct. 25, p. 2176.

[3] Reference is to telegram 1679 to Saigon, Oct. 22, p. 2161.

> Saigon will have necessary authority, responsibility, and freedom of action to carry out an urgent but limited program designed to bring about an improvement in the loyalty and the effectiveness of the Free Vietnamese forces in the hope that within the immediate future the present Diem Govt can be strengthened to such an extent that longer-range programs can be decided upon with a reasonable expectation of success; (*b*) assuring the cooperation, and assistance from Vietnamese and French authorities at all levels in Free Vietnam.'

"I believe that there is no question concerning need and importance of coordination. I am certain that you fully recognize also that US alone must of necessity control and administer funds which are appropriated by our Congress for direct aid to govts concerned. Thus whatever practical arrangements our people work out to assure effective coordination would not be for joint or tripartite control and administration of programs but for full exchange of views and information to prevent duplication and wasted effort and to avoid action without our knowing each other's views and without pooling our knowledge of the facts. I am sure that by thus working together we can get maximum value out of our efforts to strengthen and support independence and security of Associated States.

"There may remain some differences of emphasis between us on certain details on procedure or timing, but I am sure we are in agreement on our basic goals in IC. I am convinced France and the US must work for establishment of a govt of national union around Diem to enable us to succeed in reaching our common goal of a strong and independent govt in Free Vietnam."

DULLES

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Meetings with the President"

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor (MacArthur)

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY [WASHINGTON,] October 30, 1954.

Participants: The President
Secretary of State
Under Secretary of State
Asst. Secretary of State—Mr. Merchant
Douglas MacArthur II—Counselor
Colonel Goodpaster [1]

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

(c) *U.S. Personnel situation in Vietnam*

The Secretary said that the general situation in Vietnam was very confused. He had given thought to this matter and believed that perhaps the best way to get it straightened out was to send a high-ranking

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[1] Col. Andrew J. Goodpaster, Jr., Staff Secretary to the President.

U.S. official to Vietnam in whom the President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and Governor Stassen would have full confidence. This official would have to be one of considerable prestige and he would be given very broad authority to act so that there would not have to be constant reference back to Washington on detailed matters. The Secretary said that he believed it should be an Army officer but that it was obvious any General selected would have to have a very high degree of political judgment. He had in mind three names as possibilities: General Lemnitzer, General Hull, or General Taylor.[2] The Secretary asked the President if he had any views. The President replied that he thought it was a good idea and of the persons mentioned believed General Hull was the best candidate. He added, however, that in his judgment General Collins[3] would be the best qualified U.S. Army Officer that he could think of. The Secretary replied that he had a high regard for General Collins and thought he had grown greatly in stature in the last two years. The President said he suggested General Collins not only because of his outstanding qualifications but also because he was on the spot and presumably could be designated quickly. The Secretary said there was a problem in that the Secretary of Defense and the Pentagon might be reluctant to release Collins from his NATO Standing Group responsibilities, particularly having in mind the New Approach question. The President replied that he felt General Collins could be spared and that General Gruenther[4] could adequately handle the New Approach problem with our NATO allies. He also thought consideration should be given to notifying Ismay[5] that we temporarily wished to make use of Collins' services on a special assignment. The President then tried to reach successively by telephone Secretary Wilson, Deputy Secretary Anderson, and General Collins. Since none of them was in Washington, he directed Colonel Goodpaster to follow up on this to find out General Collins' plans. He also said the White House would be in touch with the Secretary on this matter when they had further word from General Collins and the Department of Defense. The President indicated that he would request the Department of Defense to release Collins for this assignment.

[Here follows discussion of subjects other than Indochina.]

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[2] Lt. Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Research, U.S. Army; Gen. John E. Hull, Commander in Chief, Far East, and Commander in Chief, United Nations Command; Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, Commanding General, Eighth U.S. Army, in Korea.

[3] Gen. J. Lawton Collins, U.S. Representative to the Military Committee and Standing Group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command.

[4] Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

[5] Lord Ismay, Secretary-General of NATO and Vice-Chairman of the North Atlantic Council.

751G.00/10–3054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, October 30, 1954—2:25 p. m.

1793. No distribution. Verbatim text. Have delivered by safe hand following personal message from Fishel to Prime Minister Diem:[2]

"Very dear Friend: There is no longer time for meditation. You must move ahead boldly, confidently, and with trust in your friends. Compromise with Hinh as Heath has urged is only course possible for the moment. There is no alternative. Be wise and patient. Give our military advisors time and opportunity to become effective. We will not permit Hinh or others to use American aid for their own selfish purposes. Act as a statesman. If Hinh states publicly that he and army will cooperate with your government, accept his offer graciously, as we agreed weeks ago. Tour provinces with him and also members of your government to show people you are concerned about their welfare and that government and army are united against communist danger. Reference President Eisenhower's message of support, we await your statement of approval to proceed with technical assistance program. You must act now if you want to save your people and your country. Sorry I am not with you now when you need me. I shall come to Saigon again however as soon as possible. Sincere best wishes and thanks for your many kindnesses. Wesley Fishel."

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Sturm of PSA.

[2] In telegram 1683 from Saigon, Nov. 3, Heath reported that he had delivered the message to Diem at noon that day. (751G.00/11–354)

611.51/10–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, October 30, 1954—5 p. m.

1835. Rptd info Saigon 242. Following delivery of the Secretary's message to Mendes-France this morning (Embtel [*Deptel*] 1565)[1] Ambassador delivered copy to LaChambre.

LaChambre accepted text with little comment. He seemed particularly pleased at evidences our intention to have a full exchange of views and information with the French before taking action. He recalled how in his last talk with General Smith before leaving Washington, they had agreed that a means must be found to adjust Franco-US policy to changing circumstances. They agreed that it would be necessary to have periodic exchanges of views either in Paris or Washington. They considered that one way to coordinate action would be to delegate a greater degree of authority to the top U.S. and French representatives in Saigon.

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[1] For telegram 1565 to Paris, Oct. 29, containing the text of the Secretary of State's message to Premier Mendès-France, see p. 2193. Regarding delivery of the message by Dillon, see telegram 1839 from Paris, Oct. 30, *infra*.

This constitutes suggestion which LaChambre is now making as a means of improving Franco-US coordination of policy and avoiding misunderstandings such as we have just encountered. He reiterated his own confidence in Ambassador Heath and his willingness to delegate full authority to General Ely so that he and Ambassador Heath, if the Dept saw fit to give him a similar authority, could study problems on the spot, make formal recommendations and take joint action on their own responsibility. He offered his personal opinion that in recent instances Heath had received instructions to take action which was not what he might have done on his own. LaChambre stated that under no circumstances would decisions be taken in Paris on Indochina policy without consulting Ely in advance.

The Minister then went on to make a series of other observations on Indochina affairs which are subject of immediately following telegram.[2]

DILLON

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[2] Telegram 1836 from Paris, Oct. 30, reporting La Chambre's observations on the Diem–Hinh conflict in general, the intentions of Bao Dai, the possibility of including Tam in the government, and other aspects of the situation, is not printed. (751G.13/10-3054)

751G.13/10-3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, October 30, 1954—5 p. m.

1839. Repeated information Saigon 245. Reference Deptel 1565.[1] I delivered letter in reftel to Mendes this morning. He said he appreciated the statements expressed in second paragraph and that his main concern was that U.S. and French work so closely together on a day-to-day basis that there could be no opportunity for them to be played off one against the other in Vietnam. In this connection he said he thought it would have been better if, in view of the time that had elapsed since the Washington talks, U.S. had conferred with French prior to delivery of letter to Diem, both regarding content of letter and date and method of delivery. Mendes then said that the information which he had received so far from Saigon indicated no improvement in the situation but rather a continuation of the steady deterioration which had characterized South Vietnam for some time.

He then asked me to take up Secretary's letter with LaChambre, which I intend to do later today.[2]

DILLON

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[1] Dated Oct. 29, p. 2193.

[2] See telegram 1835 from Paris, Oct. 30, *supra*.

Eisenhower Library, "Project 'Clean Up', Indochina"

Memorandum of Conference at the Residence of the Secretary of State, Washington, October 31, 1954, 4 p.m.[1]

TOP SECRET

Present: Secretary of State
Under Secretary Hoover
Assistant Secretary Robertson
Honorable Douglas MacArthur
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Admiral Radford
General J. Lawton Collins
Colonel A. J. Goodpaster

Mr. Dulles opened the meeting with a brief review of the discussions leading up to the decision to undertake action assigning General Collins as special representative of the President in South Vietnam to bring about a satisfactory situation there. He indicated that General Collins would exercise the powers of all of the Departments. He stated the job would be a difficult one, but one of great importance.

Admiral Radford stressed the difficulty of the assignment. He thought General Collins would find united, partially concealed opposition to the establishment of a sound South Vietnam situation on the part of the French. He thought the French may have a very different objective—that of linking South Vietnam with the Communist regime in the north.

Mr. Dulles recognized these difficulties, but pointed out that there are available pressures to exert on the French, in the same manner as the pressures exerted in connection with the London accords. For example, Mendes-France was "aghast" when Mr. Dulles told him that if Diem fell he would probably pull out of Vietnam entirely. He indicated that a message from the French indicates that they want to have two top people on the spot with full authority.

Mr. Dulles indicated that Ambassador Heath has been due for replacement in the very near future, and that this is well advanced. He will be pulled out at once.

Secretary Anderson raised the question as to how the handling of the "new approach" to NATO will be managed.

General Collins indicated that Truesdell [2] can handle this very well; someone more senior may be needed at the actual meeting. The possibility of Admiral Radford acting along these lines was brought out.

Mr. Dulles indicated General Collins should endeavor to leave on Tuesday, November 2.

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[1] Drafted by Colonel Goodpaster, Staff Secretary to the President.

[2] Maj. Gen. Karl Truesdell, Jr., U.S. Chief of Staff, NATO Standing Group, Washington.

In connection with briefings and documentary material for General Collins, Mr. Dulles mentioned the Mansfield report[3] which deserves serious consideration. He indicated we must impress the French that we will pull out if the situation cannot be brought into proper form. His inclination is to back Diem, who has many essential qualities despite being weak in others. There is no real alternative. He indicated he was not thinking in terms of a twenty-division force, but rather of a constabulary loyal to the government.

To General Collins' question whether Mendes-France is reconciled to getting out of Indo-China, Secretary Dulles answered Yes, noting however that Mendes-France hopes for continued friendly ties. Secretary Anderson stated that Mendes-France said the French will pull out if the Vietnamese so request. He added that the Vietnamese have done so informally, but not formally.

Admiral Radford indicated present thinking is in terms of a 5½ light division force plus militia for the Vietnamese, coming to 230,000 personnel, costing perhaps 400–500 million for the first year.

General Collins hoped General O'Daniel would stay. It was indicated that this was anticipated.

Secretary Dulles indicated the scope of General Collins' task was Vietnam only. He added that French troops should come out as fast as possible, although order is being maintained in Saigon now only through the presence of French troops.

General Collins asked how much money was available, over what period, and from what sources. This was discussed inconclusively, and it was agreed that the specialists would have to brief him on this.

Secretary Anderson indicated Defense and FOA representatives would get together to "audit" just how much money is in fact available (as well as actions in the Philippines, Burma, Thailand, etc. which have by inference drawn on these funds).

In response to General Collins' question, Mr. Dulles indicated an authority in writing would be given. This would include a letter from the President,[4] and probably a statement of authority from the Departments in more detail. The principle would be to provide all needed authority, but not to engage the prestige of the President unnecessarily.

Mr. MacArthur pointed out the necessity of informing the French and Vietnamese before a public announcement was made. The necessity for an early public announcement was agreed.

It was agreed that General Collins should see the President before departing, probably on Tuesday.[5]

A. J. Goodpaster
Colonel, CE, US Army

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[3] See footnote 2, p. 1997.

[4] See letter of Nov. 3, p. 2205.

[5] See memorandum of conversation, Nov. 3, *ibid.*

120.1551G/11–154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, November 1, 1954—7 : 47 p. m.

1807. Eyes only. Personal from Secretary for Heath. You will learn from following telegram[2] of the President's decision to send General J. Lawton Collins to Saigon on a special emergency mission. I want you to know that we have been concerned to find an effective way to bridge the gap between your departure and Harrington's[3] arrival, and at the same time inaugurate our crash program of aid to Vietnam as auspiciously as the circumstances permit. Since the military aspect of this crash program is so important not only to the security of Free Vietnam, but also to a solution of the Hinh–Diem controversy which must be resolved if we are to move ahead in that country, we believe Gen. Collins' presence there will be particularly useful at this time.

As you are preparing to leave Saigon after more than four years as Chief of Mission I want to express to you my very sincere gratitude for your unselfish and effective dedication to the immensely difficult task that has confronted you and, on behalf of the Government, to thank you for a hard job well done.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA.
[2] *Infra.*
[3] Julian F. Harrington, Minister at Hong Kong, had been slated to succeed Heath as Ambassador in Vietnam.

120.251G/11–154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, November 1, 1954—7 : 37 p. m.
NIACT

1608. For Ambassador Dillon from Secretary. FYI the President has given further consideration to rapidly deteriorating situation in Vietnam. The major aspects of situation there are the continuing civil-military conflict and the reported expansion of Viet Minh influence and control. In view imminent change in US Chief of Mission in Saigon, the President has decided to send Gen. J. Lawton Collins as Special US Representative with personal rank of Ambassador to Saigon on a temporary mission to continue efforts already begun to coordinate and direct US activities in Vietnam in support of US policy objectives. There should be overlap of a few days between Ambassador Heath and Gen. Collins. After Heath's departure Kidder will act as

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated niact to Saigon for information as telegram 1808.

Chargé d'Affaires. While it is difficult to estimate how long Gen. Collins mission will require, we can assume forty to sixty days with possibly ninety days at most. His terms of reference are in separate telegram.[2] End FYI.

It is essential that the Governments of Vietnam and France be informed about the President's decision before any public announcement is made. Accordingly, you are requested immediately to inform Mendes-France, or in his absence appropriate high authority, as follows:

Begin message. I have read with great interest Ambassador Dillon's report of M. LaChambre's suggestion, following my telegram to you of Friday, Oct 29, that both US and French representatives in Saigon be given greater degree of authority.[3] I have taken this matter up with the President who immediately agreed. The President has designated Gen. J. Lawton Collins as Special US Representative with the personal rank of Ambassador to direct and coordinate an urgent emergency program to help meet the threats to Vietnam's independence and security. As you may know Ambassador Heath's tour of duty in Saigon is completed and he is about to leave. For a limited period of sixty to ninety days thereafter Gen. Collins will have broad authority to direct, utilize and control all agencies and resources of the US Government with respect to Vietnam. Gen. Collins will be temporarily relieved of his duties as US Representative on the Military Committee of NATO. He has the complete confidence of the President, myself and other interested Departments and Agencies. His wide contacts with French officials, particularly with Gen. Ely, will enable him to provide effective assistance in helping to meet urgent tasks in Vietnam. The visits which Gen. Collins has already made to Vietnam while Chief of Staff US Army have familiarized him with the background. I believe this action of the President is responsive to M. LaChambre's point. *End message.*

I desire that you act on above instructions immediately and report your conversations urgently so that plans can proceed for public announcement if possible Tuesday afternoon Washington time, and with departure late Wednesday, November 3, 1954, for Saigon.[4] Heath should orally inform Gen. Ely.

DULLES

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[2] Regarding the terms of reference for General Collins, see letter from the President to Collins, Nov. 3, p. 2205.

[3] See telegram 1565 to Paris, Oct. 29, p. 2193, and telegram 1835 from Paris, Oct. 30, p. 2196.

[4] In telegram 1844 from Paris, Nov. 2, Dillon reported the following: "In absence both Mendes and La Chambre and at suggestion Mendes' office letter to Mendes containing message given your 1608 handed Margerie this morning with copy to Saint-Mleux, La Chambre's *Chef de Cabinet*. Both expressed appreciation and keen interest in this step. Presumably no objection immediate announcement." (751G.13/11-254) The Ambassador added the following later in the day in telegram 1858: "Margerie confirms Mendes pleased and entirely agreeable immediate announcement." (751G.13/11-254)

120.251G/11–154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, November 1, 1954—7 : 38 p. m.
NIACT

1809. For Ambassador Heath from Secretary.

[Here follows a paragraph which is identical in substance to the first paragraph of telegram 1608 to Paris, November 1, *supra.*]

It is essential that the Governments of Viet-Nam and France be informed about the President's decision before any public announcement is made. Accordingly, you are requested immediately to inform Diem, or in his absence appropriate high authority, as follows:

> The President has temporarily relieved General J. Lawton Collins of his assignment to the Military Committee of NATO and designated him as Special U.S. Representative with the personal rank of Ambassador to direct and coordinate an urgent emergency program to help meet the threats to Viet-Nam's independence and security. As you may know Ambassador Heath's tour of duty in Saigon is completed and he is about to leave in the immediate future. General Collins will temporarily have broad authority to direct, utilize and control all agencies and resources of the U.S. Government with respect to Viet-Nam. He has the complete confidence of the President, myself and other interested Departments and Agencies. The visits which General Collins has already made to Viet-Nam while Chief of Staff U.S. Army have familiarized him with the background. I am sure that you will welcome this action of the President. *End message.*

I desire that you act on above instructions immediately and report your conversation urgently so that plans can proceed for public announcement if possible Tuesday afternoon Washington time and with departure Wednesday November 3, 1954 for Saigon. You should also inform General Ely.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated to Paris for information as telegram 1609.

120.251G/11–254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, November 2, 1954—7 p. m.

1675. Repeated information niact Paris 559. I saw Diem at one and again at four this afternoon and informed him of substance of Deptel sent Paris 1608, Saigon 1808,[1] and Deptel 1809 repeated Paris 1609,[2] which last only received at three p. m.

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[1] Dated Nov. 1, p. 2200.
[2] *Supra.*

When I first saw Diem he asked for two or three hours to think matter over. When I saw him at four he said that of course he deeply appreciated President's desire to help Vietnam in its present precarious situation and would be happy to welcome General Collins as special United States representative, the more so as he knew General Collins had a thorough knowledge of problems of Far East. There was one thing that bothered him personally and officially, that my departing so quickly might be interpreted as reflecting on me personally and policy I had followed. There had been newspaper rumors of my departure but I had never confirmed them and general belief was that I was to remain on for some time. He had only learned from my lips in our first talk today that I had planned to leave in any case on December 1. Therefore, while he would not object to press release being made tomorrow in Washington, he would ask that his Ambassador there be consulted prior to its issuance; his Ambassador might have some ideas that would avoid any unfortunate effects in Vietnam. He had given his Ambassador carte blanche to agree to anything.

I did my best to persuade Diem that there would be no comments harmful to his government or to me in prompt release of press announcement and told him of my personal friendship and respect for General Collins, but he was rather stubborn, insistent that his Ambassador in Washington be consulted prior to issuance press statement.

Late arrival of second telegram prevented me from going to Dalat today to see Ely because of bad flying conditions. I will go to Dalat early tomorrow morning and wire immediately on my return to Saigon before noon.

HEATH

120.251G/11-354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, November 3, 1954—2 p. m.

1686. Sent niact Paris 563. Personal for Secretary and Ambassador Dillon. Department's telegram 1809.[1] I flew to Dalat to see Ely this morning.

I explained to Ely that I had almost completed my tour, although for obvious reasons I had not made any announcement of it. I had been informed that I was to receive another post and it was desirous that I proceed to it as rapidly as possible as there had been no chief of mission there for some time. My government was preoccupied with replacing me with a new man without experience here and it had even been considered having my successor stay a month with me before my departure.

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[1] Dated Nov. 1, p. 2202.

Now, however, the President had decided as interim solution that General Collins would come here with rank of, but not as, Ambassador, leaving Kidder as Chargé d'Affaires, and with full powers to coordinate all American agencies and their resources working with respect to free Vietnam. I pointed out certain advantages, that Collins had already made visits to Vietnam, and had, I knew, enjoyed most cordial relations with General Ely. I then gave latter message which Department's telegram 1809 directed me to convey to Diem. I told him I had planned to convey this information to him yesterday, but arrival of another telegram and flying conditions had prevented it.

Ely replied that he had warm friendship and high esteem for General Collins, a statement he repeated several times. He must say, though, that sending him out here on such a publicized mission would create a very bad impression in France and in Free Vietnam, and would be exploited by Viet Minh. He said it must not be forgotten that under Geneva agreements he had to cope with Viet Minh. Sending of Collins would be certainly misunderstood. In general it would be taken as meaning that United States was going to take over Indochina. Kidder, who was with me, understood Ely to say that under such conditions he himself might not be able to remain.

Even if General Collins mission were not preceded or accompanied by publicity, effect would be bad. Only circumstances under which such a mission would not create difficulties would be for General Collins to come as he had on previous visits, remain eight days or so, but not giving up his membership on NATO Military Committee.

Ely remained firm in this position despite further arguments on our part and said that he was wiring Mendes-France and perhaps Ambassador Bonnet his reaction which he had just given me.

If the proposed announcement has not yet been released, I suggest that General Collins mission might be played down. I personally feel that as interim measure proposed mission of General Collins would be very useful, provided it is not unduly publicized. Press of course will read all sorts of things into his mission no matter what explanation is given, but absence of any fanfare about his mission will not give handle for Viet Minh propaganda, possible objections by India at least on armistice commission, and will tend to dampen unwelcome speculation in Vietnam. Publicity can occur after successful accomplishment of his mission. In any press statement made on his departure, it might be desirable to describe him as a special or personal observer of the President looking into changed aspects of our program in aiding free Vietnam, such as question of disposition of military matériel previously furnished, question of replacement of matériel under Geneva accords, economic and related problems.

HEATH

751G.00/11-354

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 3, 1954.

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT [1]

Participants: General Collins
Colonel Goodpaster
Secretary Dulles

The President read the letter of instructions.[2] He commended it for its clarity and approved it. There was then discussion of the mission, and particularly relations with the French. General Collins spoke of the necessity of phasing down the French forces, perhaps more rapidly than the French contemplated. He said he understood the French planned to have at least 100,000 troops still there by January 1956. I noted that there would probably not be enough money both to maintain French forces of this magnitude for this period and at the same time develop indigenous forces.

The President suggested to Collins that if he felt that this question of a rapid phasing down of French forces was important, he should not deal with that matter directly with General Ely, but ask the State Department to deal with it at the political level in Washington or in Paris. I concurred in this procedure as preferable. I pointed out that this was a matter which would probably be discussed by the President and me with Mendes-France when he was here later this month.

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[1] A one-page record of this meeting prepared by Colonel Goodpaster is in Eisenhower Library, Whitman file, ACW Diary.
[2] *Infra.*

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

The President to General J. Lawton Collins [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, November 3, 1954.

DEAR GENERAL COLLINS: The threat to the independence and security of Free Viet-Nam has reached such a critical stage that emergency measures are required to assist Free Viet-Nam to maintain itself, and to promote United States policies regarding Viet-Nam. Accordingly, I am designating you as Special United States Representative with personal rank of Ambassador to go to Saigon for a limited period to coordinate and direct United States activities in Viet-Nam in support of United States policy objectives. I am hereby instructing you to undertake this mission with broad authority to direct, utilize and control all the agencies and resources of the United States Government in Viet-Nam.

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[1] This letter was prepared in the Department of State. A draft was transmitted to Secretary Dulles by Assistant Secretary Robertson by memorandum of Nov. 2, for approval by the President. (120.251G/11-254) In a memorandum for the President, Nov. 3, Dulles stated that the letter had been approved by the Defense Department and FOA and was satisfactory to General Collins. (120.251G/11-354) President Eisenhower approved the letter the same day. (See memorandum of conversation, *supra*) The White House announced the appointment of General Collins by press release of Nov. 3. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, Nov. 22, 1954, pp. 777-778.

Your mission is undertaken on behalf of the United States Government and all its agencies will assist you as required in this difficult and essential task. I have complete confidence that your wide experience will enable you decisively to assist in dealing with the urgent problems which confront not only the Vietnamese Government but the free world in Viet-Nam. In your conversations and dealings with local French and Vietnamese authorities, you are authorized to speak with complete frankness and full authority on behalf of myself and the Government of the United States. You should keep the United States Government fully and currently informed of the progress of your mission through the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense where appropriate regarding military matters.

For your guidance, the basic policies of the United States with respect to Viet-Nam are as follows:

1. To maintain and support a friendly and independent non-Communist government in Viet-Nam and to assist it in diminishing and ultimately eradicating Communist subversion and influence.
2. To assist the Government of Viet-Nam to develop and maintain forces necessary for internal security and to foster economic conditions which will strengthen and promote the survival of a Free Viet-Nam.
3. To provide United States assistance directly to the Government of Viet-Nam and to coordinate information and exchange of views on such assistance with Vietnamese and French authorities.
4. To encourage expanding relationships between Free Viet-Nam and its non-Communist neighbors, and support for Free Viet-Nam by the free world.

The immediate and urgent requirement in carrying out these policies and in meeting the deteriorating situation in Viet-Nam is to assist in stabilizing and strengthening the legal government of Viet-Nam under the premiership of Ngo Dinh Diem. Accordingly, the principal task of your mission is to coordinate and direct a program in support of that government to enable it to: (*a*) promote internal security and political and economic stability, (*b*) establish and maintain control throughout the territory, and (*c*) effectively counteract Viet Minh infiltration and paramilitary activities south of the military demarcation line. As an initial framework for a concrete program of action you should (*a*) use the joint instructions which the Departments of State and

Defense transmitted to the American Embassy in Saigon on October 22[2] and (*b*) take into consideration the latter's reply of October 27, 1954.[3]

As this immediate program progresses, I will expect to receive your recommendations.

You will in these matters seek, and I hope obtain, the cooperation of the French authorities. Their cooperation will greatly facilitate the discharge of your mission.

You are of course advised of the United States position and policy with respect to the agreements of the Geneva Conference on Indochina and to the United States Declaration made there and in these matters you should conform to such position and policy.

I appreciate your undertaking this difficult and delicate mission which is of such great importance to the United States. This assignment and these instructions are convincing evidence of the firm intention of the Government of the United States to help the Vietnamese people preserve and promote their liberty and welfare.

With warm regard,

Sincerely, [DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER]

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[2] See telegram 1679 to Saigon, Oct. 22, p. 2161.

[3] See telegram 1609 from Saigon, Oct. 27, p. 2188.

751G.11/11-354

Memorandum for the Record by General J. Lawton Collins[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] 3 November 1954.

Subject: Call of Vietnamese Ambassador, Mr. Tran Van Chuong, on General Collins, 3 November 54

1. The Vietnamese Ambassador, Mr. Tran Van Chuong, made a courtesy call on me this afternoon in the Pentagon.

2. He expressed his pleasure at the action of the President in sending me to Viet-Nam as a special representative of the United States. He said he was confident that the Viet-Namese would welcome my assignment.

3. The Ambassador went on to state that since we had little time he would be quite frank and perhaps brusk in his remarks. He said that while he had faith in General Ely as an honest man of high integrity, he is convinced that the French had been and still were opposed to the Government of Premier Diem. He cited, for example, that while General Ely was in Washington in September 1954 and agreeing to support the Diem regime that his deputy M. Daridan had gone to Diem

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[1] At the direction of General Collins, his office transmitted a copy of this memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State Robertson on Nov. 3.

and given the latter 48 hours in which to appoint Tam as Minister of the Interior knowing that Tam and his son, General Hinh would be divisive elements in the Government.

4. He stated that the only reason General Hinh had defied the Premier was that Hinh knew he had the backing of the French. The Ambassador said that the Viet-Namese look upon both Tam and Hinh as traitors.

5. When I asked why the Premier had not relieved Hinh as Chief of Staff and if necessary have taken vigorous action against him, he replied that the Premier felt too insecure in Saigon, particularly since he felt that the French would support Hinh.

6. When I asked whether Bao-Dai had given Diem authority to appoint and relieve the Chief of Staff of the Army, he stated that Diem had this authority and that he was the first Premier to whom Bao-Dai had entrusted this authority. He went on to say that Bao-Dai would have supported Diem in taking action against Hinh but after the first reaction to Hinh's insubordination Bao-Dai was afraid to step in as he feared Hinh's power.

7. When I asked whether Hinh had any genuine following in the Army the Ambassador replied that he did not know the extent of such following. He said that the Viet-Namese who have never had the means of protecting themselves were naturally inclined to follow anyone who seemed to be acting with the support of the French. At least the Viet-Namese would be afraid to support anyone who did not appear to be the potential winner. He personally felt that Hinh did not have the genuine loyalty or support of the Viet-Namese Army.

8. He therefore suggested that I "not be cautious" in my approach to the problem of supporting Diem. He said that the subordinates under General Ely are not at all cautious in their opposition to Diem. He urged that the United States not be afraid to take more direct action in support of the Diem Government since the Viet-Namese knew that we had no intention of remaining in Indo-China whereas they were still highly skeptical of French intentions.

9. He indicated that I should urge Diem to relieve Hinh as Chief of Staff and that I should make clear that I would support such action.

10. I asked if there was anyone in his judgment who might be competent to assume the post of Chief of Staff. He replied that Diem had originally appointed General Vy but that Vy was afraid of Hinh's power and refused to take the post.

11. Needless to say, I made no comments with respect to his suggestions nor gave any indication that I would follow them. I did say that I was going out there without any preconceived ideas but that my instructions were definitely to support Diem and his Government. I stated that I would keep in the background as far as possible, would

make no pronouncements and would do everything to attribute to Diem any progress that might be made in solving the complex problems that face us.

J. Lawton Collins

751J.02/11-354 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET Vientiane, November 3, 1954—1 p. m.
[Received November 4—8:35 a. m.]

88. Repeated information Saigon 137, Phnom Penh, Paris unnumbered. At dinner Luang Prabang November 1 Crown Prince was in particularly jovial mood as result what appeared to be successful formation new government (re Legtel 89)[1] which he characterized as not strong but stable. He admitted it was largely reshuffling old elements (rather than young team he had sought) but emphasized it was genuine National Union government which, if it received solid assembly majority as he anticipated, would remain in power until elections. These he said His Majesty intended to fix for June. While recognizing there was still possibility of slip-up, Prince was jubilant that, despite serious difficulties, he had been able persuade all political elements to cooperate. He gave impression he himself intended to provide missing element of strength.

Prince declared it is firm Lao intention to resist communism which is contrary to all traditions and sentiments its people. It would, however, be futile for Laos to try do so alone and unsupported. For resistance to be successful, the people must feel they are backed by US and other principal free world powers.

I assured Prince US intends to maintain its support and cited inclusion Laos in area covered by Manila Pact, continuing US aid to Lao military effort and economy, and accreditation Resident Minister. I also alluded to our intention to supply aid directly in future, to set up separate FOA mission in Vientiane and to open negotiations these subjects with new government as soon as it takes office. Prince expressed satisfaction with these assurances.

He was most optimistic re ability Lao government control internal situation if necessary outside support forthcoming and no further foreign aggression occurs. He ridicules claim Pathet Lao leaders are not Communists but asserts they are few in number and most of their followers will return to national camp after Viet Minh withdraw. He is bitter at inactivity ICC and naivete Indians but considers there will nevertheless not be serious difficulty in repossessing Sam Neua and

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[1] Telegram 89 from Vientiane, Nov. 3, is not printed. (751J.02/11-354)

Phong Saly after November 21, if government acts with sufficient vigor as he intends it shall.

In summary he believes combination posture of military readiness, energetic police action, prompt economic aid to villages and active dissemination national propaganda will within next six months sufficiently stabilize internal Lao situation so that Viet Minh infiltration need not be feared and elections can be faced with confidence. On the other hand, he emphasizes that forced recruiting and removal to Communist countries of young Laotians which ICC has done practically nothing to prevent, will cause Laos trouble for years to come.

Prince's optimism may well be excessive and have arisen in part from mood of moment nevertheless we find his courage, energy and confidence healthy and believe they may play important part in fostering conditions he forecasts.

YOST

751G.00/11–554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY

PARIS, November 5, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 3:49 p. m.]

1927. Repeated information priority Saigon 263. Embassy officer had hour's conversation with Bao Dai last night. Bao Dai was affable but nervous and was on defensive throughout most of conversation.

We reported first on Collins mission, reasons for it and hopes of what it would accomplish. We expressed regret at Heath's departure, which Bao Dai strongly seconded, but hope that Collins' presence Saigon should serve as proof US determination bolster Vietnamese govt and help bring about solution to difficulties which have beset Ngo Dinh Diem since office. We referred to Collins' high rank and authority and to previous cordial working relations with Ely.

We told Bao Dai that we regarded his role as important in solving present difficulties and influence he could exert in effecting reconciliation dissident elements might be decisive. We outlined in detail and with emphasis position US Govt that legally-constituted govt Vietnam headed by Ngo Dinh Diem must be given every chance to succeed and that our policy of granting support to that govt had been confirmed in Washington during Franco-American conversations last Sept and several times since, notably during Secretary's last visit to Paris. Policy still remained in force. We referred to Franco-US agreement in matter and to recognition both countries fact that if Free Vietnam is to be retained in free world community and occupied Vietnam restored to it govt must be given every chance to succeed by receiving not only unequivocal support both countries but that of Chief of State as well.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

We referred to dangerous conflicts in Saigon, particularly that between Hinh and Ngo Dinh Diem. We reminded Bao Dai of influence he might bring to bear to solve these conflicts which had helped to cause virtual paralysis of govt functions. We asked what his views and intentions were in the matter.

It became readily evident from Bao Dai's replies that he had anticipated our questions and declarations of policy well in advance and was fully prepared with right answers. He expressed understanding and agreement with virtually all our points. He acknowledged his own responsibilities, explaining that he regarded himself as father of group of naughty children who must be brought into line without taking side of one child against another. He recognized necessity of giving Ngo Dinh Diem govt full support and intended to do so. It was with a view to contributing to solution of present difficulties, particularly personal feud between Diem and Hinh, that he had decided to take certain action. For moment action consisted in sending personal emissary Luy Quang to Saigon with personal messages expressing his position. Quang bore letter to Hinh in which Bao Dai ordered Hinh back to Paris for consultation and suggested methods by which it could be made possible for Hinh to obey Bao Dai's command without losing face in Vietnam. He had also sent message that he wished sects, particularly Binh Xuyen, to cooperate with Diem govt and hoped General Bai Vien would accept a cabinet post.

Bao Dai emphasized that in taking this action he was not taking sides with Diem against Hinh. He believed that principal responsibility for Diem–Hinh feud lay with former who had behaved in tactless and offensive manner and had, in effect, "double-crossed Hinh" by not living up to plan which would have permitted Hinh to withdraw from the scene gracefully and have avoided feud. In this Diem had permitted unpardonable error of forcing Hinh lose face, Bao Dai said. This was another indication of Diem's political ineptness which had proved itself to be greater than Bao Dai had anticipated when he had named him to office. He regretted both this and Diem's tendency to be inordinately stubborn as well as his packing of govt with relatives. Nevertheless, Bao Dai's faith in Diem as patriot and potential leader stood firm. He would succeed at his job if he could be prevailed upon to accept advice and participation in govt of other leaders who were more politically sophisticated and who brought with them the strength which Diem required in order enforce his politics.

Bao Dai added that his action in recalling Hinh to Paris was only part of what is required to solve present impasse. Other essential step is to convince Diem that he must be more conciliatory to actual and potential members govt, must reduce his own stubbornness and cease to rely solely on brothers and personal entourage for advice at expense of other leading Vietnamese. Bao Dai said that he could not influence Diem in this regard and that task must therefore fall upon us. He therefore suggested that in conjunction with his own action vis-à-vis Hinh that Heath or General Collins be instructed by Dept to lay down strong line to Diem about being more cooperative. Bao Dai thought that Collins' assumption new duties might provide an excellent opportunity for making this position clear to Diem and would fit in well with Bao Dai's own *démarche* to Hinh. We replied that we would make these views known promptly to Department and Saigon and could assure Bao Dai that necessary steps would be taken.

We questioned Bao Dai with regard to present movement in Paris to advance Buu Hoi as potential Vietnamese leader. Bao Dai said that he had the highest regard for Buu Hoi as patriot and humanitarian but that he thought it would be a pity to throw scientist into "den of lions" when services could best be used to serve mankind in another. capacity. In any case, he had no intention of advancing such plan for present as he intended concentrate on solving problems of present government not on finding substitute for it. He did not mean exclude possibility, however, that Buu Hoi might at some future date assume some public office in Vietnam.

We referred to rumors that Bao Dai was returning to Vietnam himself in near future and to effect this had of prolonging present political paralysis in Saigon. Bao Dai stated rumor was not true. He had no intention returning Vietnam for present at least, believing that his services as Chief of State could best be used to arbitrate difficulties and thus bolster present government. Nevertheless he reserved right return at any time when in his judgment presence Saigon required.

We asked whether Bao Dai was confident that Hinh would follow orders. He believed he could be counted upon do so. Provided Ngo Dinh Diem behaved tactfully and made it possible for Hinh to withdraw without loss of face. We asked whether Hinh's summons to Paris indicated he would be removed from present position as Chief of Staff. Bao Dai said not. Hinh was best man for his job as Diem was best man for his. He did not intend to dispose of one in order to preserve the other for both were sorely needed but he intended to do his best to effect reconciliation.

We were struck by effort Bao Dai had obviously given to preparing correct answers for us. With his customary shrewdness he had evidently surmised what our position would be from other manifestations of it we have given recently and prepared himself to give satisfaction. His satisfactory responses to our points were so assiduous that some of the arguments we had held in reserve were not necessary. We believe he intends to do what he says not because he has any deep set faith in Diem but because it is path of least resistance and one which may best further his own personal fortunes. Nor do we doubt that one of Quang's tasks in Saigon is as reported to ascertain that in exchange for Bao Dai's support and effort to influence Hinh to conform Diem will agree maintain both Bao Dai's crown and purse.

If Hinh should fail to answer Bao Dai's summons or Quang should come back with a negative reply from Diem on the proposed deal we would not be surprised see Bao Dai immediately assume new tactic condemning Diem and supporting another. But we believe that for the moment, at least, his cooperation can be counted on and it would appear wise to attempt to enhance prospects for success Bao Dai's gesture toward Hinh by influencing Diem to carry out his share of the bargain as requested.

During conversation, Bao Dai refrained from usual derogatory comments about French. He asked what French position with regard to Diem was, stating that only French official he saw regularly was DeJean. When we confirmed that decision give full support to Diem represented joint Franco-US position, Bao Dai appeared pleased to have confirmation of what he had probably already been told by French.

Bao Dai was apologetic for not having received us when we originally requested interview and in parting expressed hope we would maintain closer contact henceforth, with which we of course agreed.[2]

DILLON

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[2] In telegram 1940 to Saigon (1758 to Paris), Nov. 11, the Department of State indicated that it was encouraged by the position taken by Bao Dai. (751G.00/11-554)

751G.00/11-554 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 5, 1954—4:36 p. m.
NIACT

1673. Re Paris 253 to Saigon rptd info 1875 Dept and Deptel 1594 to Paris rptd 1798 to Saigon.[2] With difficulty Department has been trying . . . follow Bao Dai's whereabouts during past ten days. We have been concerned at inability critical time lay before him US policy. Accordingly now that contact renewed Department desires Embassy get in touch with Bao Dai directly to insure he knows what

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated niact to Saigon for information as telegram 1860.

[2] Telegrams 1594 to Paris, Oct. 30, and 1875 from Paris, Nov. 3, both concerning Bao Dai, are not printed. (751G.00/10-2854)

US policy is in Vietnam. Bao Dai should be given following oral statement:

(1) US and France are agreed free world objectives in Vietnam can be advanced by supporting and assisting a government of national union around Prime Minister Diem. US believes effective Vietnamese action is needed to end dangerous stalemate in Saigon, consolidate a government of national union around Diem and counter Vietminh subversion.

(2) To be of assistance in supplementing such efforts, US is prepared to proceed with economic and military aid. The delivery of President Eisenhower's letter of Oct 23 to Prime Minister Diem was designed to provide official notification to the Government of Vietnam of the US policy of direct aid and to inform Prime Minister Diem that we are prepared to discuss with him as Chief of Government such a program. Gen Collins interim mission is designed to coordinate US agencies in order maximize capability help resolve critical problems faced by Prime Minister Diem and his government.

(3) US Govt is willing assist Government of Vietnam as practicable, and subject to Congressional authorization, in establishing and maintaining internal stability and security. If political impasse is satisfactorily resolved, the US will be in a position to aid Prime Minister Diem and Govt of Vietnam in this endeavor. The US is prepared to proceed with an urgent limited program to help improve effectiveness of Vietnamese armed forces. The US Military Assistance Advisory Group in Saigon has received instructions to this effect provided satisfactory understandings can be worked out with Vietnamese and French military authorities.

(4) These actions on our part are designed to encourage and assist the Govt of Vietnam under Prime Minister Diem, and particularly the Vietnamese military organization, to concentrate on constructive actions requiring unified Vietnamese attention.

(5) However, if a government of national union around Prime Minister Diem is not formed, or if formed does not receive full support of the national army, other groups and personalities throughout Free Vietnam, or if Prime Minister Diem is effectively prevented from even developing such a government and giving it an opportunity to attack urgent problems, then the US policy of direct aid will be faced with serious difficulties. In this respect conclusions of Senator Mansfield are relevant. At this time we see no satisfactory governmental solution other than a government of national union around Prime Minister Diem, insofar as envisaging effective US assistance or forthcoming Congressional support.

For Embassy Saigon: Inform Diem of above statement after Embassy Paris notifies Saigon and Washington Bao Dai has received it.

Department has just received Paris 1908 repeated Saigon 259[3] mentioning forthcoming Gibson call on Bao Dai evening Nov. 4. Department still desires Embassy immediately give Bao Dai above oral statement of US policy.

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[3] Telegram 1908 from Paris, Nov. 4, is not printed. (751G.00/11-454)

DULLES

751G.5 MSP/11-554 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 5, 1954—8:30 p. m.

1692. Limited distribution. Department considering what position US should reach regarding US financial support for French forces Indochina remainder 1954 and calendar 1955. Would like your views before determining Departmental position for discussion with other agencies. Believe we should move forward rapidly on this since Mendes likely raise subject when he visits Washington and in view French 1955 budget presentation Parliament which has already begun in committee.

US policy is to support indigenous forces in Indochina for purpose internal security and resistance against internal Communist subversion, and President has agreed such forces as well as US funds in support thereof should be minimized. We will not seek indigenous force levels for purpose resisting external aggression since Manila Pact intended serve as such deterrent and would come into play should aggression take place. Although French state purpose French forces Indochina for initial defense against external aggression, believe reasonable assume if hostilities resumed French would probably seek quick settlement allowing evacuation foreign forces in absence large-scale Allied intervention involving ground troops which seems unlikely. Essential motivation maintenance French forces Indochina appears be retention French influence on internal security and political situation (although not to extent of direct clash with Vietnamese National Army) partially to help free Vietnam but also to maintain French presence Indochina and French role in Far Eastern affairs.

We recognize utility continued French military presence Indochina as stabilizing factor during coming year but believe such presence would probably be as effective if say at level 30,000 men as 100,000–150,000. It is possible French are retaining larger forces than necessary in belief US would subsidize these forces in being which if stationed elsewhere would be entirely charged to French financial resources. Note French plan reduce their forces largely by transferring Vietnamese from French payroll to their own and by not replacing other elements as their tours of duty are ended. Note from press reports

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[1] Drafted by Beigel of WE. Also sent to Saigon as telegram 1875.

Faure now proposes asking US for some $300 million support for remaining French forces Indochina next year.

With above background (which is for your private guidance and not for dissemination) we now considering following position to present to Mendes-France:

1. US will fulfill prior commitments to reimburse eligible expenditures made on behalf French Expeditionary Corps prior to truce (July 21).
2. We do not believe we obliged reimburse French for expenditures made after truce. However we would agree to lump sum settlement on expenditures made on behalf FEC between July 21 and December 31, 1954.

US reimbursements under both 1 and 2 would come from remaining FY 1954 funds which have been carried over by Congress.

3. We believe French should take steps repatriate their forces from Indochina more rapidly than by normal rotation and their forces should be thereby reduced to levels within French financial capabilities. We no longer consider necessary for US to share cost these forces and we will not plan provide any further direct financial support to French forces Indochina after calendar 1954. We would agree some 6000 French forces serving as cadre for indigenous forces Indochina could be financed through Associated States as part their own military budgets to which we plan give direct financial support.

Would like your comments soonest on foregoing as well as your best estimate of (*a*) how much more we would have to pay out under paragraph 1 and (*b*) what total might be of post-truce expenditures on FEC eligible for reimbursement and what reasonable lump sum settlement you consider we might make against this amount, as well as (*c*) your estimate whether French in their own interests would be likely continue maintain Expeditionary Corps on some reduced basis even if US financial support discontinued and (*d*) effect on degree French cooperation with US in Indochina programs.

If we can reach tentative US position on this ahead of Mendes' departure from Paris we may want you to make some preliminary approach to him. Would also like Collins and Embassy's comments from Saigon on aspects this cable dealing with future action.

DULLES

751H.02/11–654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Allen) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL NEW DELHI, November 6, 1954—noon.

598. Repeated information Saigon 22, Paris 21, London 74. Saigon pass Phnom Penh 7, Vientiane 6. In talk with Pillai today I expressed

pleasure at GOI decision to recognize Cambodia. He said GOI was slightly annoyed by premature publicity but confirmed intention to extend recognition although timing had not been decided.

Pillai said GOI had originally intended merely to establish Consulates in Saigon, Phnom Penh, Vientiane and Hanoi and to accord no diplomatic recognition to any Indochinese state until after elections. However, when Nehru reached Phnom Penh, both British and American representative there had urged him to extend recognition and Crown Prince had "pled hard for it". Since Nehru could see with his own eyes that French no longer ruled Cambodia and Government seemed in control, he could find no reasonable excuse for further delay.

Pillai added that Nehru had been "emotionally affected" by evidences he saw at Ankorwat and elsewhere of Indian cultural influences. Pillai admitted that this factor might have been final consideration which persuaded Nehru.

Pillai said Laos was more difficult question since complications existed over two provinces. I gained impression that GOI might consider Laos recognition again when situation had clarified. Pillai said he did not believe there would be any consideration of recognizing Vietnam until after elections.

Comment: Nehru's personal visit to Indo-China seems to have swung him over to theory that historic Indian cultural sphere embraces Cambodia and Laos.

ALLEN

651.51G/11-654

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Young)[1]

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] November 6, 1954.

Subject: French Mission in Hanoi

Participants: Mr. Pierre Millet, Counselor, French Embassy
Mr. Kenneth T. Young, Jr., Acting Director, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs

Mr. Millet came in to see me this morning at the request of his government to inform the Department of State regarding the status of the French Mission in Hanoi. According to Mr. Millet, when Mr. Sainteny, head of that mission, had an interview with Ho Chi Minh a few weeks ago, the latter requested a statement from the French of the "quality" in other words the purpose and terms of reference of the Sainteny mission in Hanoi. Sainteny reported this to Paris. The French Government has decided that the basis for the Sainteny Mission in Hanoi should be the exchange of letters of July 21, 1954, between Mendes-France and the Viet Minh Foreign Minister, Dong, in Geneva by which French economic, financial and cultural interests in North Viet-Nam are guaranteed. Mendes-France proposes to send a letter to Ho Chi Minh referring to the letter of July 21, 1954, and designating Sainteny to take care of those interests and requesting the Viet Minh regime to facilitate Sainteny's mission.

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[1] This conversation was summarized in telegram 1727 to Paris (repeated to Saigon and Hanoi for information), Nov. 9. (651.51G/11-954)

The French Government anticipates that the Viet Minh will reciprocate not only by accepting this statement of Sainteny's status but also by requesting that a Viet Minh mission be stationed in Paris for similar purposes. Mr. Millet said that it would be difficult for his government to reject this request.

I told Mr. Millet that personally this information was of some concern. I asked him why it was necessary to have such an exchange of letters with the Viet Minh. His answer was that the Viet Minh had requested an explanation of Sainteny's mission which the French Government could not avoid. As to granting the Viet Minh request for a reciprocal mission in Paris, I pointed out to Mr. Millet that this would not find favor in the United States and it would seriously question and oppose.

120.251G/11–654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, November 6, 1954—8 p. m.

1750. Repeated information Paris 581. I saw Daridan yesterday at his request. He said he regretted Ely and La Chambre had taken position against President's letter to Diem and that Ely had also voiced objections (my telegram 1686)[1] to General Collins' mission. It seemed to him that both these steps were not only in accord with Washington understandings but logical steps in connection therewith. It occurred to him there had been full agreement in Washington on text of understanding but unfortunately words therein meant different things to two sides. It seemed imperative that between Generals Collins and Ely and between Mendes-France and President and Secretary there should be new understanding reached which would mean same thing to both parties. For example, in Washington talks question of Vietnamese elections was not agreed upon, in Daridan's view. Guy La Chambre believes thoroughly that nation-wide elections must be held in accordance with terms of Geneva agreements. That was evidently not our view. I said it was definitely not our view and we had made specific reservation against nation-wide elections not held under United Nations auspices. On other hand, it would be necessary for Diem or other government to have elections in free Vietnam to establish legitimacy and popularity of government. I added I thought this was Ely's view. Daridan said he thought that was reasonable position but if France were to espouse this view there would have to be some understanding about possible military consequences of free Vietnam's refusal to participate in or be bound by results of elections held under Geneva agreements. He would not say that Viet Minh might on such refusal renew hostilities but it was possibility. If hostilities were renewed it might mean Chinese jet planes over Saigon and it would be necessary to have American jet planes in neighborhood to defend it and indeed it would be necessary to establish airfields here that could support jets.

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[1] Dated Nov. 3, p. 2203.

2. Daridan went on to say that in spite of their misgivings about Diem as leader and administrator he thought United States and France could agree fully to support Diem as permanent solution but it would have to be subject to certain conditions imposed on Diem. Conditions would be: (1) That Diem do something immediately about agrarian reform; (2) That he put in capable Minister Interior; and (3) That President make his peace and establish himself with army. It was not question of army being reconciled to Diem. Army was only important force in this country. I said I would personally agree with all these conditions but I would have to add a fourth which would have to be imposed on Hinh. Fourth was that Hinh leave Vietnam, preferably for good or as a compromise, absent himself from this scene temporarily. He might return as chief of staff, inspector general, or possibly even commander in chief, although I thought last would be going too far. Hinh had acted very badly and was continuing to act badly. Latest episode of Hinh signing memorandum to Nehru in company with Hoa Hao, Cao Dai and Binh Xuyen Generals was political act which would not be tolerated in stable countries.[2] Hinh talked freely, to say the least, against Diem to every foreign journalist that visited Hinh's headquarters. If Diem's mishandling Hinh's insubordination had made latter champion of the army, Vietnamese civil opinion considered Hinh a Frenchman trying to reestablish French

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[2] Indian Prime Minister Nehru visited Saigon on Oct. 31 on his return to India, having visited Hanoi on Oct. 16–18, and the People's Republic of China thereafter. Joint Weeka No. 45 from Saigon, Nov. 6, reported that Hinh and leaders of the sects had presented a memorandum to Nehru expressing sympathy for him but objecting to his support for compromise with the Communists. (751G.00(W)/11–754)

colonial influence over Vietnam, an action which Diem was honored for resisting.

HEATH

751G.00/11–654 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

VIENTIANE, November 6, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received November 7—12:11 p. m.]

92. Repeated information Saigon 143, New Delhi 5, Phnom Penh unnumbered by pouch. Reference Legtel 90.[1] Souvannaphouma informed me shortly before issuance this communiqué that, as result his negotiations during past few days with Pathet Lao delegate to current joint meeting ICC and mixed commission, declaration would be made to ICC by Pathet delegate (1) recognizing sovereign Royal Government all Laos (2) recognizing right Royal Government administer two northern provinces. Prime Minister very proud his achievement and remarked correctness his policy government handling Pathet Lao would soon be demonstrated. In reply my question he insisted Pathet had demanded no *quid pro quo*. Said he intended overtly negotiate with Pathet procedure re establishing Royal administration two provinces.

I saw Souvanna again after issuance of communiqué and pointed out it fell far short of assurances to him, in fact apparently confirming Pathet intention retain administration northern provinces. Prime Minister appeared considerably deflated and admitted readily declaration unsatisfactory this point. He added it would have to be negotiated out but that would be responsibility new government. He was obviously embarrassed by direct reference to himself in communiqué. Nevertheless he has since issued statement to press welcoming Pathet declaration as step forward but emphasizing that "unity of the government necessarily implies unity administration and unity armed forces."

Initiative for negotiation and declaration probably stems from Indian ambassador whose favorite theme is everything can be settled between Lao and Pathet Lao brothers if they will only sit down at table together. Souvannaphouma inclines this view but more cautiously. His hope is to lead Pathet by gradual stages into national camp.

Agence France Presse story, published here and abroad and picked up by VOA, claiming Pathets have conceded to Royal Government jurisdiction over northern provinces, most misleading.

YOST

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[1] Telegram 90 from Vientiane, Nov. 4, concerning the work of the International Control Commission in Laos, is not printed. (751G.00/11–454)

751G.13/11-754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

TOP SECRET SAIGON, November 7, 1954—9 p. m.

1756. Repeated information Paris 584. No distribution outside Department. On eve of General Collins arrival I must state my belief that deadlock between Diem and Vietnamese Army command under Hinh can be solved; that there is a good possibility that under Diem, with French and American unity and support, government can be formed which will enjoy authority and loyalty in free Vietnam and can state "free" elections in free Vietnam which will either confirm Diem government or will return equally non-Communist, non-collaborationist government to power.

There are two reservations and several conditions to such a prediction. First reservation is that in spite of unified Franco-American support and pressure on government to set up popular administration, Diem, despite his integrity and intense patriotism, may not be up to job. His lack of personality, his stubbornness, his narrowness, and dislike of bold action may be greater than all support and guidance we give him and a possible successor must be sought. If necessary I believe acceptable successor can be found given a little time.

The second reservation has to do with "free elections". I put "free elections" in quotes. If, as one can be certain, there will be no free elections, as we understand the term, north of seventeenth parallel, that is, elections wherein non-Communist parties would be permitted to campaign several months prior to elections, with perfect freedom of movement, full facilities and with no overt or covert terrorization of electorate by Viet Minh authorities, then there is no reason why free Vietnam should allow Viet Minh or Communist candidates or electioneering in its elections.

One condition to building up solid regime in south, certainly for year to come, is unity of view and loyal cooperation between French and Americans. I believe that that is attainable to practical degree. It will not be attained if, because of our financial contribution, we try to run show 100 percent, in our American way. It will not be attained if MAAG and personnel of FOA and USIS are imbued with idea, as too many of them are now, that nothing can be accomplished here until presence and influence of French are reduced to zero. French expeditionary corps and French cultural and economic interests are present and if we try to ride roughshod over them we will find a very effective resistance. In our relations with French officials and French interests here we will have to use same cooperation which President enforced so effectively on his allied force during war. We can sympathize with nationalists but we should not be dissuaded from cooperation with French for vocal anti-French sentiments which one hears from official and private Vietnamese. In contrast with these anti-French statements one will find any number of intelligent nationalists here who realize fact that French are necessary factor here for some time to come and that there must be *modus vivendi* between Americans, French, and Vietnamese Government. Cf. my telegram of conversation with Huyen (Embtel 1728, repeated Paris 575)[2] for example:

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

I have said I believe we can obtain French support for Diem experiment in spite of their prevailing belief that Diem is political dodo and despite their resentment at rabid Francophobia of certain Diem officials and adherents. Diem who is stubbornly against changing his ideas has in past four months also begun to realize that there are good French elements here and that his troubles with French are frequently less than those with his own people.

Obviously one necessity for obtaining loyal French cooperation and support of our policy is some contribution during calendar year 1955 to cost of French expeditionary corps. Amount will have to be decided by high authority and it certainly will not be anything like contribution we made while war was still on.

If cooperative understanding with French is essential at this time to preserve free Vietnam, it is essential that Hinh be prevailed upon to absent himself from his command and from this scene for several weeks at least. It would be better if he left for good, for while he is most dynamic and clever officer we have so far observed in Vietnamese Army, to Vietnamese opinion he is Frenchman, which he is by naturalization, education, and commission in French Army. Not only does an important segment of Vietnamese opinion hold, somewhat unjustly, that he is Frenchman trying to maintain French influence here, but Hinh has also become symbol of military insubordination to civil authority. He can be gotten out of picture, I believe, and in relatively short time, although possibly not immediately. To accomplish that it will perhaps be necessary to prevail on Bao Dai to invite or order him to France on consultation. Bao Dai will take no such step without being royally paid by Vietnamese Treasury. It may be necessary to give royal expense account to Hinh himself to induce him to proceed on mission abroad. It would be worth price. It will also be necessary for French to depart from their attitude of neutrality in Hinh–Diem conflict and really to use their influence on former. French neutrality in this army-civil dispute is not true neutrality: In effect it favors military insubordination. I believe French can be brought to use their influence but probably only if Hinh can be assured that he may return after time to some ostensibly higher post in Vietnamese defense forces.

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[2] Telegram 1728 from Saigon, Nov. 5, summarizing a conversation with Pham Van Huyen, former Minister of Social Action, is not printed. (751G.02/11–554)

Our own influence to obtain Hinh's at least temporary departure will not be fully effective until we complete negotiations, in unity with French, for direct budgetary aid to Vietnamese defense forces and for American participation in training. Our negotiations to this end should be given maximum acceleration. Those negotiations will convince leading elements in Vietnamese Officer Corps that future of army is dependent on American aid and that Hinh's insubordination to Diem risks loss of this aid. We should not indulge in crude threats but above idea can be impressed on Vietnamese Officer Corps.

With Hinh absent, if only temporarily, from scene both American and French influence must be exerted on Diem to insure that he take some convincing step toward agrarian reform. Diem is not radical and has no real desire to change ownership picture of rural holdings. Left to himself he would let evolution take its course with palliative measures on rents, lengthy formation of cooperatives, et cetera. That is doubtless slowest and soundest approach but against Viet Minh propaganda Diem must move more rapidly and radically. Demonstrable progress by Diem in carrying forward constructive program benefiting the people would be single most important thing he could do to capture loyalty of officers and men of National Army. Hinh's support would wither quickly if Diem could give positive evidence of moving forward on constructive program. Army could be expected to drift away from supporting Hinh's ill-concealed personal ambitions and to respond to a sustained demonstration of leadership on part of President.

Moreover, I agree with Daridan that Diem must put someone effective in Interior Ministry to organize solid, zealous police to extirpate continuing, even growing, Viet Minh infiltration. It does not have to be Tam, although he could certainly do job. There are other strong men that can be found. Diem does not want strong man in Interior largely because of his moral scruples against rough police work. He has too strong sense of legality and fairness to population against strong police control and altogether he shrinks from use of violence. It is possible, however, to use strong police methods against Viet Minh without terrorizing or brutalizing population, if Americans join with French in seeing that there are no police excesses. After all we control purse and there are many other things which must be done to insure success of anti-Communist regime in free Vietnam, which I think can done. Present Minister of Information is young and lacking in judgment in devising anti-Communist, pro-Diem propaganda. But at least he has certain dynamism and he will listen to American and other advice.

Our USIS must be strengthened budgetwise and personnelwise. Stansbury[3] is good USIS chief. From what I have seen of Barrows,[4] now head of FOA Mission, and from his record he is an excellent man to handle complicated task before him. O'Daniel has drive and sincerity which should be effective in training mission, but he will need to be constantly cautioned because of his ill-concealed and not unfounded contempt for French military methods and his desire to run show without due attention to French and Vietnamese susceptibilities. . . .

Altogether I feel we have good fighting chance to preserve freedom and support that he has will make good start toward achieving that end.

HEATH

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[3] Edward Stansbury.
[4] Leland Barrows.

751G.5 MSP/11–854 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 8, 1954—5 p. m.

1761. Repeated information Paris 586. I am not in agreement with position taken in Deptel sent Paris 1692, repeated Saigon 1875.[1] Aside from French objectives in maintaining forces here, withdrawal of French forces in 1955 would create military vacuum which very likely, in my opinion, would be filled by Viet Minh activity based on irregular forces which Vietnamese Army in its present stage of training and discipline could not withstand. From all our reports there has been no substantial diminution in Viet Minh military strength. I do not believe Viet Minh would be deterred by Manila Pact which has neither been ratified nor implemented by appropriate military conversations and arrangements. Argument that French in case of open military invasion would seek quick settlement allowing evacuation of foreign forces is not valid in my opinion because Viet Minh operation would not be open mass invasion. It would be para-military operation of infiltration, subversion, and local use of force. Withdrawal of French expeditionary force might present appearance matter already shaken Vietnamese will to resist. Popular as idea may be of causing withdrawal of major portion of FEC, such move would entail such grave risks as to threaten continued existence of free Vietnam. I think as practical measure we should make some contribution to maintenance of FEC during at least first half 1955 although not to extent of $300 million annually contemplated by French. I suggest that toward mid-year we might look at this problem again.

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[1] Dated Nov. 5, p. 2215.

Period which we must consider is that which lies between the present and May 1956, before which time elections presumably must be scheduled. Continued presence of substantial French force over considerable period of this time is essential for maintenance of security and will not in our opinion prevent forming of effective Nationalist Government or detract from national support of such government. Our objective, however, must be to see to it that effective Vietnamese national army is created, capable of taking over from and displacing, on a phased basis, French Expeditionary Corps during this period.

Although essential initially and until Vietnamese national army is capable taking over responsibilities, presence sizeable French forces in Vietnam at time of elections, we agree, would be highly damaging psychologically and prejudicial to favorable outcome of elections in Free Vietnam.

French cooperation which is essential to the successful carrying out of any project in Indochina at this time would be gravely endangered by a complete discontinuance of US support for an adequate expeditionary corps.

Specific comments on points raised in reftel follow.

HEATH

751G.5 MSP/11-954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, November 9, 1954—noon.

1971. Repeated information priority Saigon 273. Ref: Deptel 1692, rptd 1875 to Saigon, Nov. 5.

1. Welcome opportunity comment on reftel. I note that although Dept's framework for consideration Indo-China aid problem is comprehensive in terms of the factors bearing directly on Indo-China, it omits mention of other equally relevant factors, e.g., possible effects of such a decision on overall 1955 budget prospects, NATO goals, etc. Accordingly, while Part I below is limited to direct comments on contents reftel, Part II attempts analyze effects Dept's proposed position re 1955 aid on other factors referred to above. Part III contains Embassy's overall conclusions.

Part I

2. I suggest that if point numbered 3 is adopted as final U.S. position, it be presented first, followed by a statement on 1954 aid, and that in addition to statement we are prepared to finance in 1955,

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in three parts.

through our direct aid to A.S., French cadres serving with national armies, we also indicate to French that we prepared to agree to their utilization of remaining counterpart pipeline (from FY 1953 and prior aid to France) in connection with FEC budget in 1955. This would not involve any new dollar aid but would supplement presently foreseen 60 billion franc contribution in CY 1955 from French financial resources by an additional approximately 15 billion francs.

3. On point numbered 2 of reftel, however, I foresee very considerable difficulties, with possibly serious political repercussions, if U.S. does not carry through as originally envisaged $400 million aid program for FEC in 1954 budget year. I see nothing to be gained by opening the debate that certainly would follow statement to French along lines first sentence point numbered 2. Fact is that U.S. memo of April 26, 1953,[2] which is basic document regarding $400 million commitment, did not contain an escape clause such as was included in Sept. 29, 1953 exchanges of letters regarding additional $385 million in aid. While U.S. may have technical grounds for a legal argument that we not bound continue aid after end Indo-China war, French would strongly resist such an interpretation as contrary to spirit of April 1953 memo, especially if only advanced at this late date. French are, we believe, prepared agree that reductions in FEC equipment and matériel costs (through non-placement or cancellation of contracts) should operate to reduce $400 million aid figure, and this should be formally proposed to them. As regards principle of $400 million program, I believe that on grounds of policy and equity we should continue reimburse eligible 1954 expenditures up to an amount of $400 million (less, of course, contract savings), including, as provided for in March 1 memo understanding,[3] expenditures obligated before Dec. 31, 1954 but effected during 1955 "periode complementaire". This recommendation assumes that total FEC expenditures in 1954 budget will, as French claim is case, equal or exceed original estimates (approximately 290 billion francs), and that French contribution from own resources will remain as presently budgeted.

4. French 1954 Indo-China budget was based by French in good faith on certain aid undertakings by us, and it was impossible for French substantially to reduce FEC expenditures in six months immediately following the Geneva Armistice. If, as we expect they will be, FEC expenditures in 1954 budget are equal to or in excess of original estimate of 290 billion francs (less contract savings), and if U.S. were to refuse to reimburse its agreed share of expenditures, thus leaving French with payments not covered by expected receipts, French Government would feel it had legitimate grounds for maintaining that U.S. had broken its word.

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[2] See footnote 2, p. 507.

[3] Not printed.

5. In view recommendations set forth above on 1954 aid, and in view extreme difficulty in making worthwhile calculation at this time, we are not attempting to estimate amounts referred to in items (*a*) and (*b*) of penultimate para of reftel. However, as indicated above, total of (*a*) and (*b*) will be extremely close to $400 million. Since we believe we should fulfill our commitment, $400 million less possible contract savings and less payments to date ($119 million—a figure which would be considerably larger except for the FOA slowdown) would in our view be only reasonable lump-sum settlement. However, we consider that it would be in U.S. interest to make reimbursements only as they come due under March 1 memo procedures. This, among other reasons, because it lessens short-run pressure on U.S. Treasury and because existing procedures assure adequate expenditure documentation for accounting and GAO purposes. Our comments on items (*c*) and (*d*) of penultimate para of reftel follow below.

6. As regards (*c*), obviously, if there is no 1955 aid we lose one of our principal levers in influencing French Indo-China force levels and the timing of FEC phase-out in these circumstances. We cannot be certain of French reaction, but we believe that unless the Vietnamese Government (over which we presumably will continue to have substantial influence) were to request an earlier withdrawal of FEC, French in pursuit of their own interests will maintain it at some reduced level during 1955. Indeed, complete withdrawal on an orderly and economical basis does not appear to be feasible much before beginning 1956.

7. As regards (*d*), termination of aid will certainly not enhance French cooperation with U.S. in Indo-China program; however, aid consideration is only one factor among many which bear on this problem, and there are latent conflicts over such questions as makeup of Vietnamese Government, nature of aid coordination machinery, need for holding 1956 elections, and best way to deal with Viet Minh which can lead to French non-cooperation, even though aid were continued. (Should note here it also seems likely if there is no U.S. aid for FEC in 1955, French will reduce or eliminate their proposed economic aid to Associated States.) Aid termination would, however, provide additional ammunition to leftist or neutralist opponents of U.S. policies, even though in principle such elements object to concept of military defense of Vietnam which FEC signifies.

[Here follows Part II containing a detailed analysis of the relationship between United States aid to France for operations in Indochina and the French budget as a whole.]

Part III—Conclusions

19. In view of past commitments, and in order to make decision re 1955 aid as palatable as possible to French, U.S. should reimburse

French for eligible expenditures under 1954 Indo-China program up to a total of $400 million, subject to caveats set out in para 3 above.

20. Re question of 1955 aid to FEC, after weighing financial and political considerations applicable to metropolitan France, we conclude that position Department is now considering is justified. Certainly, there is no economic justification (balance-of-payments or budgetary) for any such aid. Above analysis accepts Department's view that on military grounds there is no justification for maintenance of FEC forces in Indo-China at a level which would exceed France's own financial capabilities.

21. On political grounds, there remains a possibility that a negative decision re new aid, by adding to Mendes' problems with Parliament over the 1955 budget, could endanger life of government. There is also risk that French cooperation with U.S. in development various programs in Indo-China would be lessened by a decision to grant no aid in 1955. Of course, we should not overlook possibility that adroitly timed aid offer could be used as positive incentive to obtain FEC force reduction. These broader political factors give us cause to hesitate before ruling out all aid, and should be carefully considered by Department. If after reconsideration Department concludes broad political factors make it essential that some aid be given, we would recommend following formula. After 1954 FEC program completed and after planned 60 billion franc French contribution to FEC in 1955 entirely expended, U.S. might match additional French contribution franc for franc up to total U.S. contribution of 35 billion francs including remaining counterpart, accruing in 1955 (estimated to be $40 billion). (In any case, we recommend that this counterpart, which is French-owned, be made available to France to supplement France's own FEC contribution.) This would allow for 130 billion franc FEC program and would help Mendes with his parliamentary budget problem. Offer should of course be accompanied by statement that unless circumstances greatly changed there would be no U.S. aid in 1956.

22. Much will depend, of course, on how decision, negative or otherwise, is presented to French. We would hope aid questions could be kept separate from any prestige considerations arising from Mendes' Washington visit and therefore hope that French will not raise it there. However, as Department aware, French under definite impression that Governor Stassen will come Paris not later than December 1 for renegotiation 1954 aid agreement and to give answer re French request for 1955. If this is not U.S. intention, French should be definitely so advised, so that they can raise question during Washington talks if they so desire.

23. In any case, I do not favor my discussing aid question with Mendes prior to forthcoming talks in Washington.

DILLON

120.251G/11-1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 10, 1954—2 p. m.

1788. Repeated information Paris 592. I accompanied Collins[1] on his initial calls on Diem, Foreign Minister Do, and Ambassador Daridan.

Collins outlined his terms of reference and explained to Diem that prior to arriving at any conclusions he was interested in learning the facts influencing the situation in Vietnam.

Diem discussed at some length refugee problems, problems caused by Sects, and then at very considerable length insubordinate attitude of General Hinh which had completely deadlocked, he claimed, progress of his government. He said, as he has frequently said before, that Hinh was utterly untrustworthy and not efficient, and that only solution was his departure on some military mission away from Vietnam for at least six months. He alleged, as he often has before, that French could easily order Hinh back to service in French Army from which he is only absent on congé. I observed, as I had before, that it was uncertain whether French would order Hinh back to service in French Army or that he would go if he were ordered, and mentioned that any departure of Hinh would have to be arranged with due regard to saving face for himself and the Army.

During call on Tran Van Do latter drifted into explanation of beginning of Hinh Diem conflict. He recalled meeting of officers of General Staff of Vietnamese Army which had voted deposition of Bao Dai and dismissal of Diem Government. Hinh had opened meeting, but had not taken part in discussions. When news of this action of staff officers reached Diem, he immediately ordered arrest of Colonels Lam and Giai, heads of G-5 and 6 in army. Hinh had immediately gone to see Diem and said that punishment of these officers was his responsibility. Hinh had offered once matter was arranged to go on leave in France saying that he was extremely fatigued. Following day Chan, State Secretary for Defense, had appeared suddenly in Hinh's office, gave him order to undertake military mission in France, handed him airplane tickets, and said he must leave 36 hours later. Hinh had protested he could not leave so precipitately and said he would name his own date. Chan returned next day with tickets for plane leaving three days later. Hinh had then refused to go except at time of his own choosing and conflict was on. Tran Van Do very plainly indicated that if Chan had handled matter in less arbitrary fashion, dispute might have been settled.

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[1] Gen. J. Lawton Collins, U.S. Special Representative in Vietnam, arrived at Saigon on Nov. 8.

In our talk with Daridan, latter took same line he had in previous conversation in regard to nationwide elections in Vietnam.

He said unsettled point in Washington conversations with Ely and Guy LaChambre was question of whether nationwide elections were to be held in July 1956 as prescribed by Geneva agreements. French took line that nationwide elections could therefore not be held. Daridan said he personally was quite prepared to accept thesis that nationwide elections should not be held, but there should be clear understanding between US and France to that effect and agreement as to what defensive action should be undertaken if Viet Minh on pretext that non-holding of elections was violation of armistice, should renew hostilities. Daridan took line that if we agreed that nationwide elections would not in fact be held Diem might be acceptable Chief of Government of Free Vietnam, although US and France should join their influence to force him to undertake much needed governmental reforms and action. If nationwide elections were to be held in accordance with Geneva agreements, then stronger and more effective Chief of Government than Diem must be found.

HEATH

120.251G/11–1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, November 10, 1954—3 p. m.

1789. From Collins. On 7 November in the company of Ambassador Spruance,[1] I called on President Magsaysay at Malacanang Palace. Following is report on our discussion:

1. After the usual amenities, President Magsaysay referred to the situation at Vietnam and expressed pleasure that President Eisenhower had decided to send someone to coordinate all United States activities in Vietnam.

2. Magsaysay commented on Diem's lack of leadership and forcefulness and his apparent unwillingness to take positive action, particularly in enforcing his will on General Hinh.

3. He said he had met Hinh about a year ago when the latter visited Manila. He referred to Hinh as a playboy, but said he thought that Hinh had some ability. He recommended that action be taken to force an accord between Hinh and Diem and suggested that he might be able to help in bringing Hinh into line. He offered, if I felt it advisable, to invite Hinh to visit him in Malacanang and said that he would emphasize to Hinh the necessity of the latter supporting United States policies and objectives in Vietnam.

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[1] Raymond A. Spruance, Ambassador in the Philippines. General Collins visited the Philippines en route to Vietnam.

4. I told Magsaysay that one of our objectives was to develop support for Diem's government from the other non-Communist nations of the South Pacific and Southeast Asia. In furtherance of this idea, I asked if his government would give consideration to an early recognition of Diem's government (Ambassador Spruance had informed me of his efforts to secure such recognition). Magsaysay laughed and said that he and Ambassador Spruance had discussed this many times, but that as long as the French were really controlling the Government of Vietnam, he felt that the Philippines could not recognize the Diem government. I suggested that recognition by the Philippines and other neighboring countries would strengthen Diem's hand in relation to the French. But Magsaysay only smiled and would make no further comment on this score.

5. I then raised the question of Philippine aid in training the Vietnamese forces. Magsaysay stated that the Philippines would be glad to cooperate in every way. A few Vietnamese are in the Philippines now and he said that he would be glad to have General Vargas[2] organize courses for the training of additional Vietnamese on a regular basis.

6. He then expounded his view that the Vietnamese should follow the scheme which he had applied in the Philippines with the pacification of the Huks and the development of the security in the outlying provinces. He advocated the use of the army as a basic agency not only in putting down rebellious elements, but also in handling problems of resettlement, the construction of roads and the building of public works in new settlements. He agreed with the concept of organizing Vietnamese forces only for internal security and the reliance on the Manila Pact for protection of Vietnam against external aggression. He said, however, that he would prefer to aid in the training of the Vietnamese Army along the lines indicated rather than have to send a Philippine division some day to Vietnam to aid in combatting aggression. He indicated a willingness to do the latter if it should ever become necessary.

7. In discussing the type of training which the Philippines could give the Vietnamese, he stressed courses in problems of resettlement and in psychological campaigns to build up the morale of the Vietnamese and combat Communist propaganda.

8. I expressed appreciation for the suggestions of the President and his willingness to cooperate. I told him that after I had had time to study these problems on the ground and discuss them with the heads of United States Missions in Saigon, that I would communicate with him further through Ambassador Spruance.

HEATH

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[2] Gen. Jesus Vargas, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

120.251G/11-1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, November 10, 1954—7 p. m.

1794. Repeated information Paris 595. Department pass Defense From Collins. I had two-hour conversation with Ely yesterday at Dalat. In cordial atmosphere and with what I believe to have been considerable frankness we reviewed major problems facing us here, discussed in general terms provisions of President's directive to me, and reached preliminary agreement with respect to fairly wide range of issues.

Ely did not conceal that his first reaction to my assignment had been adverse. He said that he had feared Viet Minh would seize upon it as pretext for agitation which might build up dangerously. However, there had been no such development, nor had he noted any untoward reaction among population of Free Vietnam. During conversation I took occasion to impress upon him that my mission here is diplomatic and in no sense narrowly military. Summary of principal points I made and Ely's responses follow.

1. I said my directive called for development and adoption of measures to foster friendly, non-Communist government in Vietnam, and in particular to support Diem. Ely replied that he had backed Diem and would continue to do so, but that he feared this was a losing game. At present time there is no government in Vietnam. Basic problem to be resolved is Hinh–Diem feud. Ely thinks that at this stage Diem is more to blame than Hinh for persistence of quarrel. Until some *modus vivendi* is worked out between the two, government will remain paralyzed.

When I asked what alternatives Ely might envisage, he answered that one possibility was to attempt to build up around strong Interior Minister an internal structure capable of buttressing the weakened state. He hesitated to mention the name he had in mind because the man was so ill-considered by Americans: Nguyen Van Tam. Without entering into any commitment so far as Tam was concerned, I said that the American policy is to support Diem, we are not bound to any particular Cabinet list and would certainly wish urge Diem to gather about him as competent a group of Ministers as possible. Ely expressed gratification at this statement and indicated that he could support Diem with more confidence and enthusiasm if we were prepared to bring pressure to bear in this direction.

I suggested both respect to Hinh–Diem dispute and to improvement of Diem's Cabinet that I take initiative in suggesting remedial measures to parties concerned. Prime Minister, for example, must of necessity be anti-French to a degree and must resist French pressures, therefore he might be more responsive to suggestions of a newly-arrived American. I would of course keep Ely informed. Ely agreed.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

Ely brought up Bao Dai's name later in conversation, saying that Bao Dai had asked him some time ago whether he should return to Vietnam. Ely advised against Bao Dai returning, saying that Chief of State was most unpopular figure in Vietnam. However, Vietnam is now independent, and what would we do if Bao Dai suddenly appeared unannounced? I suggested that this might be one alternative to the Diem government which would be legally admissible if Bao Dai were able to take over active direction of government. I asked whether Bao Dai would now be more acceptable to the people than at time Ely advised against his return. Ely said that state of lassitude among population now is such that Bao Dai might find acceptance. In reply to my question whether Bao Dai had courage enough to return and ability take over government, Ely answered that Bao Dai had enough physical courage to confront danger, but probably not enough courage to undertake tasks incident to heading government.

Under this heading, Ely expressed regret that my directive called so explicitly for support of Diem. He had hoped that we might consider problem together and have greater liberty consider different course of action. I answered that we felt still more could be done to support Diem and that he must be given every possible chance to succeed. If every resource is exhausted and Diem still is unsuccessful, we can take further counsel at that point.

2. I told Ely that we were thinking in terms of support for a national army capable of assuring internal security, but not of meeting large-scale external aggression. We believe protection against such aggression should be afforded by the Manila Pact. In this connection, I said, we felt that an FEC of 100,000 on January 1, 1956, appeared too large and that Congress would probably be unwilling to furnish substantial support to a force of such size.

Ely stated that French policy, adopted in consultation and accord with the US, was to maintain FEC here until national army can protect Free Vietnam against Viet Minh. He said we know that Viet Minh in north are building up military strength and believe that they would be prepared use this force against the south. If Franco-US policy to protect Free Vietnam against this danger is altered, French stand ready to withdraw FEC tomorrow. Plans to build up stable and viable non-Communist state, however, are meaningless unless Viet Minh are prevented by presence of effective military force from taking action against Free Vietnam before it is prepared to defend self. Viet Minh will not be intimidated by threat to invoke terms of Manila Pact. To be effective, any protection afforded Vietnam in this manner would have to be subject of detailed specific treaty arrangement within framework of Manila Pact. I stated it would be difficult to secure any such arrangement. Moreover, Ely added, from French viewpoint, maintenance of sizeable FEC is necessary for protection of 60,000 French nationals. Ely insisted that this question of maintaining adequate defenses in free Vietnam is the pivotal point in formulating long-range policy for the area and must be subject of further consultation between us.

With reference to Vietnamese National Army, Ely said that he strongly opposed its being weakened by existence of independent and often rival armed forces. He agreed that army must be subordinate and loyal to the legal government but not threatened by other forces within its own territory.

3. I told Ely that our policy was, as he knew, to provide aid directly to the three Associated States. While we are anxious to coordinate our efforts with French, we must have full authority and responsibility for distribution of American aid; tripartite bodies could serve for full exchange of information but could not have executive power. As part of this direct aid, we wish to have training responsibility for National Army.

Ely replied that he had long ago invited General O'Daniel to bring in as many as 500 or even 800 training personnel "to operate under the Commander in Chief". Our problem now, he said, is to develop an American training program which will not provoke Viet Minh reaction or charges that it is in violation of the armistice agreement. Such a program, however, must be effective within imposed limitations and "take account of my authority". I reiterated that while we would be willing to direct training in accord with broad agreed policies, we should have to have full authority to execute program.

I mentioned to Ely that I had been informed many staff sections in Vietnamese National Army were headed by French officers. I suggested he give consideration to replacing progressively such French officers by Vietnamese, the French withdrawing to positions as advisors to their Vietnamese counterparts.

Ely agreed to do this; details to be worked out later.

4. I told Ely that the fourth major point of my directive was to foster relations between Vietnam and its neighbors in Southeast Asia. I told him briefly of my conversation with President Magsaysay in Manila and said that the Philippines stand ready to help in training Vietnamese to meet problems which in many respects are similar to those confronted and overcome by the Filipinos. In resettlement, for example, the Filipinos have had an experience which might usefully be shared with Vietnamese authorities responsible for relocating refugees from Communist rule in the north. Ely appeared receptive to this idea but made no particular comment.

Concluding conversations, I said that I had been delegated broad powers and hoped that Ely might have similar authority so that we might make joint decisions promptly and without having to refer every detail to our respective governments. Ely replied that within the limits of French policy in Indochina, which he helped formulate, he had great latitude and felt that he needed no further delegation of authority.

As an initial exchange of views I believe conversation with Ely was satisfactory. Of course much remains to be done if we are to work out mutually acceptable formulas for support of Diem Government and for military defense of free Vietnam's territory.

HEATH

751G.5 MSP/11-1054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, November 10, 1954—7 p. m.

2011. Repeated information Saigon 284. Pass copy FOA. We had opportunity this morning talk briefly with Cheysson [1] about IC aspects Mendes' trip Washington. Cheysson said they hoping have full and frank discussion IC matters while Washington (this reflected by fact that in addition Cheysson, Jacques Roux and Froment-Meurice will join delegation Washington). We gathered from conversation following are principal IC subjects French would like discuss Washington:

1) Although Cheysson was obviously reluctant to talk about anything except fact they wished discuss United States aid FEC and "tripartite aid committee", we did manage draw out that Mendes and his IC advisers considering possibility proposing that Bao Dai delegate full powers imperial representative to reside at Saigon. Although Cheysson did not say so in so many words, we gained impression that this formula being currently considered because it would permit Diem remain PriMin. This presumably satisfying American desires retain him but at same time would place overall and real power at Saigon in hands of imperial delegate thus satisfying French desire eventually find alternate solution what they consider to be ineffective Diem govt. We said this corresponded to one of the current variants of what appeared to be a wide-scale press campaign favoring Buu Hoi's assumption prominent political role Viet Nam. Cheysson (almost indignantly) stated he unaware any campaign being carried on in favor Buu Hoi at Paris, and said that while Buu Hoi might be man suggested for post imperial delegate Saigon, such a suggestion should properly emanate from Saigon and not Paris. We pointed out however that

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[1] Claude Cheysson was currently serving as Deputy *Chef de Cabinet* in Premier Mendès-France's personal Cabinet, and as an adviser on foreign affairs.

while such a suggestion might emanate from Saigon, since Buu Hoi longtime resident France and perhaps better known Paris than Saigon, it might well be that we in Paris would unavoidably be called upon to express our views in this regard. We then asked if Cheysson had read *L'Express'* two-page spread on Buu Hoi and introductory comment. Cheysson changed subject by saying an imperial delegate Saigon need not necessarily be Buu Hoi and reiterating that any suggestion along these lines would probably originate Saigon. He did add that imperial delegate formula would permit getting rid of Bao Dai while retaining thread legitimacy and powers deriving from position chief of state Viet Nam.

Emb Comment: In view foregoing, we think it possible that some such suggestion as outlined above may be made during Mendes' visit Washington and presented as formula for getting rid of Bao Dai while retaining advantages deriving from imperial and chief of state roles and at same time providing for strong central authority south Vietnam able to rally support disparate elements in effort counter Viet Minh inroads. We inclined to think, however, that by time Washington talks, and as we indicated Embtel 1928,[2] French may feel Buu Hoi campaign may have gone too far for American sensibilities as regards his apparent soft line toward north Viet Nam and Buu Loc, who currently linked Buu Hoi campaign, may then be advanced as more palatable alternate.

2) Cheysson preferred talk about United States aid. He said that while French satisfied Franco-American understanding had been reached regarding tripartite committees for coordination economic and technical assistance IC states, they concerned that nature this understanding not fully realized IC. He said this perhaps due to French in IC trying exceed terms September understanding Washington and perhaps also due unwillingness United States officials IC to go as far as terms understanding. For example, he said our Embassy Phnom Penh apparently unaware agreement establish tripartite committee that country. Cheysson reiterated that French fully agree United States aid be extended directly to governments three IC states and that United States exercise full control over use United States funds so extended; however, French desire tripartite committee framework within each country to insure effective coordination economic and technical assistance plans before individual country aid missions initiate implementation specific plans which presumably part coordinated plan for country as whole. Cheysson said they principally interested in making certain at Washington there no misunderstanding regarding French and United States definitions of basic Franco-American September understanding. "If there is, Mendes

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[2] Telegram 1928 from Paris, Nov. 5, reporting on an article by Buu Hoi in *L'Express*, is not printed. The telegram characterized the article as having a "strong neutralist tenor." (751G.00/11–554)

hopes to be so informed while Washington". We limited our comments this regard to Secretary's recent letter this subject.[3]

3) Cheysson said they would hope that Governor Stassen might be in a position to inform them regarding United States intentions regarding aid for Expeditionary Corps.

DILLON

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[3] See telegram 1565 to Paris, Oct. 29, p. 2193.

751G.00/11-1054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 10, 1954—5:25 p. m.

1737. Limit distribution. Paris 1883 and Saigon 1751.[2] Department agrees we should make our position toward Buu Hoi known to French prior Mendes talks.

Embassy Paris should therefore orally inform Foreign Office we have been struck by recent publicity given Buu Hoi as possible candidate for Prime Minister and desire US position be clear.

Basically we are supporting efforts Diem to form government of national union and believe it inconsistent with that support to discuss potential successor.

So far as Buu Hoi concerned we can state that if he or person his political ideologies were to become Chief of Government Viet-Nam a basic reexamination our present policy with respect Viet-Nam would be entailed. In our view congressional reaction with respect to his appointment (or to one sharing his policies) would be very negative.

You should point out to Foreign Office this expression our views tendered in effort clarify any possible misunderstanding on part French as to US views this subject.[3]

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 1928.

[2] In telegram 1883 from Paris, Nov. 3, Ambassador Dillon suggested that in view of the campaign being waged in France on behalf of Buu Hoi as a potential successor to Premier Diem, the United States might apprise the French Government of its reservations in that regard. The telegram included background information on Buu Hoi which indicated a possible willingness to treat with North Vietnam. (751G.00/11-354) In telegram 1751 from Saigon, Nov. 6, Ambassador Heath stated "we vote against Buu Hoi," and agreed that the French might be approached on the matter. (751G.00/11-654) Neither telegram is printed.

[3] In telegram 2014 of Nov. 11, Ambassador Dillon reported that Roux at the French Foreign Ministry had been informed that in the event that Buu Hoi or a politically similar individual became Premier or Imperial Delegate with full powers the United States would be compelled to undertake a basic reexamination of its Vietnam policy. (751G.00/11-1154) Dillon further reported in telegram 2018 of the same date that Cheysson had received the views of the United States on Buu Hoi "without grace." His annoyance was described as manifest. "Cheysson reacted," the telegram stated, "as though we had thrown monkey wrench into his plans." (751G.00/11-1154)

Department has made same point to French Embassy Washington when this matter raised recently on two occasions.

DULLES

120.251G/11–1254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET SAIGON, November 12, 1954—10 p. m.

1807. Repeated information Paris 598. From Collins. Diem told us 10th that Bao Dai had sent Hinh orders to report to him in France by first available plane. Understand Hinh received duplicate messages containing orders, one through Defense Ministry and other through imperial cabinet office here. Hinh informed Diem that he could not obey orders for seven or eight days.

I told Diem that I had had no conversation with Hinh and would receive him for first time 11th. I added however that it seemed to me means should be found to save Hinh's face in departing since although he is an obstructive element at present he may prove useful at some future time.

Thereafter I discussed problem with Ely who was present at same social function. We agreed that we would both advise Hinh to obey Bao Dai's summons promptly. On taking leave of Diem I told him of this agreement. He expressed gratification and said he had already talked over matter with Ely.

Reference Paris 1984 to Department, repeated Saigon 276.[2] Diem did not mention any orders Bao Dai may have sent to Xuan or Bay Vien.

At my invitation Hinh called 11th. He spoke forthrightly concerning impasse between him and Diem. He recounted in detail background of difficulty with Diem and declared latter incapable of providing proper leadership.

He stated that primary current problem is to establish some effective system for resisting the infiltration of communism. He felt that during war governmental propaganda and indoctrination program had been inadequate with result that Viet Minh still have many adherents in free Vietnam, particularly outside large towns and cities. He believes that army is only vehicle with discipline, organization and means to reorient people toward national government.

Despite lack of government support, he has marshalled army forces in certain provinces to help people and to win their support. He believes that such utilization of army in a peacetime role will assist government materially. Hinh reported that where he has implemented system results have been most encouraging (and I have reports from my observers which tend to confirm this).

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] According to telegram 1984 from Paris, Nov. 9, not printed, Bao Dai had reportedly cabled Generals Hinh and Xuan, ordering them to return to France, and had instructed Gen. Le Van Vien to cooperate with Diem. (751G.00/11–954)

He referred to civilian companies of unpaid volunteers. He said that in these groups called companies of psychological action 100,000 civilians (pedicab drivers and manual laborers) are organized under general supervision of psychological warfare section of his staff. Hinh declares that it is the activity of this group which government views with concern and fears might lead to revolution.

Hinh declared that if he had wanted to start a revolution, he would have done so before now and that he could start one today if he wished. He stated that he would take no action except for benefit of Vietnam despite government's opposition to him and army.

Hinh stated that situation which had existed past few months must end shortly otherwise south Vietnam will be lost within one or two months. He said he has taken advantage of opportunity created by dispute between him and Diem to demonstrate to world latter's incompetence and inability to lead. However, he said it was not up to him to determine if Diem should remain as Prime Minister.

He added however that there are two ways to get rid of Diem: (1) Bao Dai could dismiss Diem or (2) Hinh could execute a *coup d'état*. However, external considerations had prevented Chief of State and Hinh from getting rid of Diem. Hence latter remains, but if he continues in office he must cooperate with all elements of society, especially with army.

Hinh further stated that decision must be made shortly, either by Diem, army, Chief of State or US to resolve current political crisis. He said that those who intervened to keep Diem in power are responsible for future of Vietnam. He said he realized Vietnam needs American aid but if that aid, employed under incompetent leadership, leads to certain defeat, Vietnam would do better without it.

I thanked Hinh for his frankness.

I told him that I had heard that he had instructions from Bao Dai to report to latter in France and urged him to comply promptly. I assured him that in his absence any steps that I took would be in support of freedom of Vietnam. I also assured him I would do nothing while he was absent which would in any way lower his or army's prestige. I said however that I had just arrived and was not yet in position to make firm recommendations to my government as to action it should take and I agreed with him that system which he urged (utilization of army described above) made a lot of sense to me. I told him flatly however that if he was to defy Bao Dai he would have to stand alone.

Hinh admitted that he had instructions to report to Bao Dai but stated that he had not yet made up his mind whether to obey. If he decided not to go to France he would execute a *coup d'état.* He said that question was whether Vietnam was better off with Diem and US aid or without Diem and our help. He said he realized that if he executed a coup he would have to forego US aid. I assured him that if he revolted US aid would definitely be withdrawn.

I asked Hinh if Cabinet changes suggested by General Alessandri (Embtel 1796 repeated Paris 596)[3] appeared sound to him and he replied that he was completely indifferent to proposals. I suggested that when he returned from France he do so as Inspector General or in capacity other than Chief of Staff. I asked then if he would support nomination of General Vy as his successor. He said he would.

Hinh then asked whether I would ask Diem to effect changes if I should determine that his government was incompetent. I replied frankly that I was not committed to support any particular Cabinet but was committed to support Diem.

I then asked him when he expected to leave to report to Bao Dai. Hinh replied he had not decided whether he would leave Vietnam or start a revolution. He said if he decided to go, he would probably leave fifteenth. He said that he was not motivated by any desire to protect his position and, in fact, he would very much like rest of several months; but that he had a responsibility toward country and though he held no hatred for Diem he was convinced that Prime Minister was leading Vietnam to destruction. I again urgently advised him not to attempt a revolution but to obey Bao Dai promptly. Hinh replied he would consult with his friends and determine whether Chief of State was above country or the country above Chief of State.

At the conclusion of our discussion I outlined to Hinh some of my thinking for support of Vietnamese forces. I told him of my conversation with Ely and latter's agreement that US take over training of Vietnamese armed forces. I pointed out that it was planned gradually to replace French officers on Vietnamese staff by Vietnamese officers. I told him of my conversation with President Magsaysay and latter's enthusiastic response to my suggestion that Philippines assist free Vietnam in training and providing guidance in various fields of endeavor.

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[3] General Alessandri, military adviser to Bao Dai, visited Ambassador Heath on Nov. 10. Alessandri, having returned to Saigon to assess the political situation for the Chief of State, presented a proposal for a durable government under Diem and a list of specific candidates for the various cabinet posts. Among his suggestions were that Phan Huy Quat and Buu Loc serve as Vice Presidents, that the Interior Ministry go to Le Kieu of the Binh Xuyen or to Nguyen Van Tam, and that Ho Thong Minh be named Minister of Defense. Heath reported this conversation in telegram 1796 from Saigon, Nov. 11, not printed. (751G.00/11–1154)

I assured Hinh that I would urge Diem at every opportunity to broaden framework of government and repeated that in his absence I personally would make no recommendations which would derogate from the prestige of the army or his position. Hinh's parting words were that he would decide within 48 hours whether to go to France or start a revolution and he said that if he did not leave there would be trouble.

Despite a certain amount of bravado in Hinh's statements I was quite impressed with his personality and ability. He spoke forcefully and with great clarity and gave me at least the first impression of a sincere desire to save his country in the face of what he regards as an utterly inadequate government. He is still somewhat immature and, despite his protestations to the contrary, is personally ambitious. However, he has qualities of drive and imagination which should be preserved and if possible used to the maximum in a constructive way.

I do not take seriously his threat of a *coup d'état* but as I do not know the man and know little of his actual hold on the army I cannot guarantee this judgment.

HEATH

751G.5/11-1254

The Acting Secretary of Defense (Anderson) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, 12 November 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: This letter is in further response to your letter of 11 October 1954 on the subject of the development and training of indigenous forces in Indochina. The views of this Department on the training of Vietnamese forces were contained in a letter to you dated 20 October 1954.

With reference to the levels of indigenous forces that should be developed in Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reconsidered the recommendations contained in their memorandum of 22 September 1954, subject: "Retention and Development of Forces in Indochina" which was made available to you under letter of this Department dated 28 September 1954. This reconsideration was conducted in light of the views expressed in your letter of 11 October 1954.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the ultimate objectives of the military forces of the Associated States should be:

Viet-Nam—To attain and maintain internal security and to deter Viet Minh aggression by a limited defense of the Geneva Armistice demarkation line.

Cambodia—To maintain internal security and provide for a limited defense of the country.

Laos—To maintain insofar as possible internal security. (It is recognized that Laos does not have the capability to defend against overt aggression.)

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have expressed the view that the Viet-Namese and Cambodian forces considered as the minimum required ultimately to carry out the above objectives are as contained in their memorandum of 22 September 1954, referred to above. The Department of Defense concurs in this view.

While it is true in a general sense that the military establishment of a single state within a collective security group need not be so large as would be required if that nation had to act alone to defend its security against external aggression, there would nevertheless appear to be merit with respect to Viet-Nam and Cambodia in the maintenance by these countries of forces in excess of those necessary for the strict requirements of internal security:

a. The problem of internal security in Viet-Nam is particularly acute, and exceeds in magnitude that normally to be expected in a country of its size. Considerable numbers of Viet Minh guerrillas and sympathizers are known to be active within the territory of free Viet-Nam. These organized groups present a threat to the Government beyond that which could be met by internal security forces in the conventional sense. The Government of Viet-Nam has announced an intention of requesting the phased withdrawal of French forces by 1956. The withdrawal of French forces, whenever it may be, would require the entire burden to be assumed by indigenous forces.

b. Indigenous forces in Viet-Nam and Cambodia organized, trained, and equipped to provide a limited capability to carry out the mission of resisting external aggression would contribute to the development of national confidence and stability. The absence of such a capability, and a military establishment suitable merely for maintaining internal security, would tend to create a sense of weakness and insecurity.

c. With respect to the threat of external attack, indigenous forces, although not capable alone of stemming and repelling an aggression, could provide immediate resistance to an attack which might otherwise proceed with relative impunity, and could complement with ground forces whatever other military efforts might be exerted through collective action.

In the development of indigenous forces in Viet-Nam and Cambodia, the U.S. interest and practical necessity would require that the build-up be in phased increments dependent upon continued resistance to Communist encroachment by the Governments concerned consistent with:

a. French willingness to accept U.S. training responsibility.

b. Capability of the Associated States to develop effective and reliable forces.

c. The ability of a limited U.S. MAAG to conduct training.

d. The continued availability of MDAP funds without detriment to other programs.

Such a phased development of indigenous forces would tend to make the costs of training and maintenance less during the initial periods than after completion of the development program. This would similarly be reflected in U.S. budgetary requirements during the early phases.

The estimated cost of training and maintaining indigenous forces is that contained in the memorandum of the Joint Chiefs of Staff referred to above. Under the terms of the Geneva Armistice Agreement, the introduction of foreign military personnel into Laos is limited to specified numbers of French personnel. In view of this limitation and the resulting prohibition of establishment of a U.S. MAAG to supervise such MDAP aid as may be granted, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have made no recommendations at this time as to force levels for Laos. However, Laos is capable of supporting armed forces of 12–15,000.

An examination of the estimated costs involved in creating and maintaining these forces will reveal that approximately $240 million for Viet-Nam and $54 million for Cambodia, is for pay and allowances of the indigenous personnel. This is computed at the prevailing national scales and may be reduced but only through negotiations with the respective governments to reduce pay and allowances. Slight savings in the first year maintenance costs may be possible also if sufficient quantities of spares and replacement equipment become available in Indochina. This can be determined only after completion of an inventory following the evacuation of the Tonkin Delta. Despite any major reduction that may be accomplished by these means, U.S. support to this area should not be allowed to impair the development of effective and reliable allied forces elsewhere.

Under the assumption that the United States Government considers it desirable to proceed with efforts to sustain the remaining territories of the Associated States against further Communist encroachment, the Department of Defense believes such efforts, once undertaken, should be effective. It therefore considers that the levels of indigenous forces recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff are proportionate to the task to be accomplished.

If, however, indigenous forces are to be developed with the military objective merely of providing internal security, the force levels recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their memorandum of 22 September 1954 might be reduced. In this connection, and pursuant to NSC Action No. 1250, 22 October 1954,[1] the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been requested to submit their recommendations concerning levels of indigenous forces that should be developed to attain a military objective confined to the maintenance of internal security.[2]

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[1] See extracts from the memorandum of discussion at the 218th Meeting of the National Security Council, Oct. 22, p. 2153.

Sincerely yours, R. B. ANDERSON

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[2] By letter of Dec. 1, 1954, to Deputy Secretary of Defense Anderson, Assistant Secretary of State Robertson acknowledged receipt of this communication. (751G.5/11–1254)

120.251G/11–1354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Vietnam (Heath) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, November 13, 1954—6 p. m.

1819. Sent niact Paris 601, repeated information Department priority 1819. From Collins. Reference: Paris 288 repeated Department 2036.[1] Shortly after my arrival in Saigon series of briefings was arranged in routine fashion, last of which was to be given by Vietnamese army 13th. Two days ago we had unconfirmed reports Bao Dai had issued instructions to Hinh "to leave by first available airplane". These reports were somewhat conflicting and by no means conclusive as to details.

Eleventh, as previously reported, I had contact with Hinh for first time. In course of discussion he expressed desire for me to visit areas being taken over from Viet Minh. I said this would be impossible for obvious political reasons. He admitted he had received instructions from Bao Dai to return to France but made no reference to their including order to report "by first available airplane". He indicated he would probably leave 15th. I urged him comply with whatever instructions he had from Bao Dai. No reference was made by either of us to his conducting briefing scheduled 13th but since he indicated he would be leaving 15th I assumed he would in fact conduct briefing.

Late in afternoon of 12th Embassy Counselor was summoned by Diem for second time and told that Diem was afraid my attendance at briefing 13th would be used by Hinh as excuse for his failure to comply with alleged instructions from Bao Dai "to depart by first available airplane". Diem and his brother, Luyen, urged that I cancel briefing. I replied through Counselor that such action would unjustifiably place me in most embarrassing position. However, I would bow to Prime Minister's wishes if he insisted. In latter event I would have to send brief note to Hinh stating I had just been informed officially of instructions from Bao Dai and that in consequence I would not be able to attend briefing conducted by Hinh, but that after his departure. I would arrange for briefing by Vietnamese general staff. In lieu of this action I urged that briefing should go on as scheduled even though Hinh conducted it. If this were done, I agreed send message through Embassy Paris requesting to have Bao Dai informed of circumstances in the case.

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[1] In the reference telegram, Nov. 12, not printed, the Embassy in France reported that Bao Dai had received a message from General Hinh requesting a week's delay in his departure from Vietnam in order to accompany General Collins on a tour of provinces in the central part of the country. (751G.00/11–1254)

This information was conveyed to Diem by Embassy Counselor and I understand my proposal to continue with the briefing was vigorously supported by Deputy Defense Minister Minh. Diem finally acquiesced unwillingly and on condition (1) message be transmitted to Bao Dai by Embassy Paris, which message he wished also transmit through his own channels, and (2) that I inform Hinh he not authorized use my arrival as pretext for delaying departure. (I am informing Diem of gist of message to Bao Dai but will not provide him with any text.)

General Hinh did conduct briefing this morning in exceptionally able manner. His exposition was precise, logical and forthright. He did all talking himself, clearly knew what he was talking about, and his proposals, except for size of forces envisaged, accorded with my own military experience.

I would greatly appreciate if Embassy Paris would convey sense of above paragraphs to Bao Dai. While I am loath to make any recommendations to man whom I do not know, I am convinced every possible effort must be made to preserve and put to use in Vietnam the talents which, in my judgment, Hinh possesses. He is relatively immature, politically ambitious and has certain amount of bombast in his makeup. However, under firm political control and direction he could make great contribution toward stabilizing situation in Vietnam and toward its future development.

Following briefing this morning, I talked to Hinh and informed him briefly of situation which arose afternoon of the twelfth. I told him I wanted to be sure this briefing could not be interpreted as a reason for his delayed departure. He promptly replied he had informed Bao Dai he was delaying his departure and would consider his action approved unless he heard to contrary from Bao Dai. I said, nevertheless, that in order to assure Bao Dai I intended for my part to send message to Bao Dai through Embassy Paris. He replied that this was wholly logical and agreed. Hinh then informed me he was leaving 18th. I expressed my regret he was delaying so long. Hinh replied that since he would be probably leaving for good, he had to wind up his affairs here and could not depart earlier.

Reference fourth paragraph Paris 288. While I received General Alessandri 11th, question of his return to consult with Bao Dai was not mentioned. Conversation was along lines his exposition to Heath reported 1796 to Department repeated Paris 596.[2]

HEATH

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[2] See footnote 3, p. 2240.

751G.00/11–1554 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, November 15, 1954—7 p. m.

2080. Repeated information Saigon 298 London Moscow unnumbered. Limited distribution. Probable course French action with respect Vietnam (re EmbDesp 282).[2]

I. *General.* It is becoming increasingly evident that a fundamental divergence between French and U.S. approach to Vietnamese problem exists and may be accentuated in coming months. Franco-American differences over Diem government are more fundamental than simply a divergence over how best to increase effectiveness of Vietnamese government. Complexity and pace with which internal Vietnamese political situation has evolved since Geneva has tended to obscure this fact. We feel it essential, therefore, that what appears to be probable future course of French action with respect to Vietnam be recognized now for what it is—and not as what we might hope it would be—in order that it may be taken into account in determination of future phases of U.S. policy with respect to Vietnam and not, through misunderstanding, become basis for future charges of bad faith and recrimination. Pattern of forces taking shape in France in this regard appears to be similar in its broad outline to pre-Geneva pattern and dilemma confronting U.S. at that time may be posed again.

Furthermore, we think French approach to Vietnam problem will increasingly tend to reflect broad lines of French approach to overall problem of East-West relations and degree of success encountered on either plane may be expected to have its impact on, and give impetus to, its approach on other.

II. *Probable course French action Vietnam.* We believe that Mendes, his entourage, his government are, for most part, favorably disposed to explore and consider a policy looking toward an eventual peaceful North-South *rapprochement* in Vietnam. However, this probable course of French action has a broader base and deeper roots than Mendes and his entourage. At risk of oversimplification, we think French tend to feel there are only two possible realistic solutions to Vietnamese problem: An eventual peaceful North-South *rapprochement* on terms likely to be favorable to Vietminh—since Vietminh as military victor unlikely accept anything less—as opposed to an ultimate military show-down with Vietminh and Communist bloc in an effort to prevent reunification taking place on terms favorable Vietminh in line policy to retain South Vietnam as free world bastion. In light of what we have learned in France in recent past, it would appear unrealistic to expect France to adopt latter course. While much is said regarding necessity of developing sufficient strength in South Vietnam in order to attract a majority of Vietnamese voters in the July 1956 nationwide elections, there appears to be a lack of conviction, particularly on part of those in France most familiar with Vietnamese scene, that this represents anything more than a pious hope. We think that it must be recognized that the present French Government, and we think generally, anticipate and expect nationwide elections to take place in Vietnam in 1956 and that they would consider a policy designed to reject them a violation of spirit of Geneva agreement which they are not prepared to accept. We think as well that French prepared to go along with results of such general elections however academic that exercise may eventually prove to be. French would expect to be supported by India and probably U.K. in this respect.[3]

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] Not printed.

Such approach is consistent with Mendes' position as outlined to the Assembly last July to effect that France intends to aid South Vietnam to extent possible to prepare for the elections although responsibility for outcome rests with Vietnamese themselves. As we said at time, we gained impression that Mendes' attitude was essentially "let best man win". Although broad lines of such a policy might well be expected to be clearly established within expectant life-span of Mendes' government, we are inclined to think it likely that pressures that developed in France to force settlement of the I.C. war on the best terms available may be expected to reemerge and force any possible governmental coalition that might be formed in France to adopt an approach to the Vietnam problem looking toward eventual North-South collaboration. Although there may be occasional efforts made within France to deflect such a course of French action, we think these would prove to be temporary diversions only and would emanate essentially from those groups who would wish, as a price of maintaining South Vietnam free of eventual [omission] a continuation of a large measure of French control and influence in the south. Although this might prove preferable to eventual Vietminh control, we believe

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[3] Telegram 2498 from London, Nov. 24, commenting on Paris telegram 2080, read as follows:

"Embassy concurs view expressed reference telegram UK would, under present circumstances at any rate, be unprepared accept policy designed to reject nationwide elections in Vietnam in 1956 as violation of letter and spirit of Geneva Agreement. UK takes position it entered into agreement in good faith and in absence compelling reasons to contrary it has no recourse but to support agreement. To do otherwise would stultify Western position regarding elections in Germany and Korea. Even though UKG might be willing consider contrary course it would be faced with severe criticism from imposition and tremendous pressure from India. If, however, there were flagrant Communist violation of terms of agreement demonstrable to other signatories, especially India, UK would doubtless be willing review its position, and perhaps support move postpone elections indefinitely." (751G.00/11-2454)

French themselves discount such an approach in longer term knowing that Vietnamese in south are probably not prepared for the most part to accept it and that many might turn to Vietminh as a consequence. Against such diversionary efforts that may be made to deflect French policy must be balanced wide-spread receptiveness in France to any indication of progress registered, however slight, by Sainteny in North Vietnam and frequent reiteration of magnitude and inexorable nature of the Vietminh drive toward an eventual absorption of the south.

We think Vietnam presents Mendes with a situation ideally designed to test bases of his fundamental political philosophy which appears to regard "peaceful coexistence" as a possibility to be explored, and we inclined think Mendes may prove to be principal architect and exponent of a policy looking toward the achievement of a peaceful reunification of Vietnam. It would appear that Soviet and Chinese Communist encouragement of such a French approach could easily be given since the eventual result in Vietnam would likely be at a minimum a Communist-oriented or neutralist Vietnam in the Nehru pattern. Such encouragement could also pay dividends for Soviets and Chinese Commies on broader plane in contributing to "normalization" of East-West relations.

Thus we think the present French situation permits our drawing the following tentative conclusions:

(1) That French will insist upon holding of nationwide elections in Vietnam in 1956 on theory of abiding in spirit of the Geneva settlement even though outcome of such elections may have become academic through process of erosion beforehand;

(2) That the French do not really believe that any given South Vietnamese governmental combination, with all the technical and economic resources that could be usefully exploited, can overcome present apparent political and military imbalance between the North and South in time to win any general election;

(3) That French fear that a threat of overt Vietminh military aggression will arise if any attempt is made to thwart the holding of nationwide elections in July 1956;

(4) That the French are no more willing now, and may be expected to be increasingly less so as time goes by, to risk a resumption of hostilities in I.C. and a general Asian war as an alternate to eventual North-South Vietnamese collaboration;

(5) That the French do not consider SEATO either as framework or instrument that could properly be used in support of policy designed to avoid elections and hold 17th parallel against eventual Vietminh attempt to reunify country by force;

(6) That the French do not believe that the U.S. is prepared to intervene militarily on the ground in Vietnam in an effort to establish South Vietnam as a free world strongpoint and make the 17th parallel another 38th, nor do the French think that the South Vietnamese mili-

tarily will be in a position to swing it alone or carry lion's share of burden;

(7) That the French appear to conclude from the foregoing that it is possible, and in any event that it is worth the risk, to attempt to bring about a peaceful reunification of North and South Vietnam and try keep a Communist-oriented Vietminh-controlled reunified Vietnam outside Communist orbit, and at least neutral to free world.

As consequence, we think that the French may more and more speak of the desirability of the U.S. adopting a sympathetic view of Sainteny's efforts to reduce dependence of Ho and his government on Commie China and bring Vietminh closer to free world. We may expect that this approach will be portrayed as offering the only real chance of avoiding an inevitable military show-down in Asia with which the U.S. approach to Vietnam is becoming increasingly identified in French minds.

III. *Impact U.S. aid.* Although it appears that an early cutoff or substantial reduction in U.S. aid for the French Expeditionary Corps would only further accelerate French trend toward a policy of collaboration with the Vietminh, we do not believe that continuation of U.S. aid for the Expeditionary Corps at substantial levels through at least 1955 would do more than slow down this trend. We do not think that it would reverse or appreciably modify this trend.

IV. *Present lines U.S. approach Vietnam.* Our recent exchange of views with French on Buu Hoi tended underline and make clear to French that U.S. not prepared to accept an approach in Vietnam that might eventually involve, or look toward, a policy of possible collaboration with Vietminh. At a minimum we think it can safely be said that the present French position with respect to Vietnam encompasses such a possibility. As a consequence, we are inclined to think that U.S. is currently faced, and may be increasingly faced, with prospect of France moving along a path in Vietnam which we might consider as conflicting with our ultimate objectives there.

V. *Conclusion.* We think it unrealistic to expect France in longer term to follow a course of action in Vietnam which it feels might involve it in an eventual military show-down in the Far East. Psychologically, France might have accepted such a show-down during the final days of Dien Bien Phu. However, that time has passed and the trend that led to the conclusion of the I.C. war on terms by which the Vietminh could one day peacefully take over all of Vietnam, has only gained momentum with the passage of time. Hence it would appear that when reference is made hereafter to harmonization of Franco-American policy with respect to Vietnam it will become increasingly necessary to examine our respective objectives in Vietnam and how we intend to achieve them if we are to avoid serious misunderstandings arising in months to come. To speculate, it would also appear that if South Vietnam is to be retained as a free world bastion in Southeast Asia, the burden, i.e., military, may tend fall principally upon U.S. aided by such military force as can be developed in South Vietnam beforehand, and that the implementation of such a policy inevitably will encounter resistance from French and neutralist elements on overall plane as well as an anticipated step-up in the overall Communist coexistence campaign.

DILLON

120.251G/11-1554 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State [1]

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, November 15, 1954—10 p. m.

1830. Repeated information priority Paris 602. From Collins.

Part One.

First general impressions and recommendations:

1. Diem is a small, shy, diffident man with almost no personal magnetism. He evidently lacks confidence in himself and appears have an inherent distaste for decisive action. His handling of the Hinh case since I have been here tends to support this estimate.

2. I have not seen enough of Diem personally to evaluate his more favorable attributes nor do I yet know what hold he has on Vietnamese people. While I am not now prepared to express a general judgment on Diem, I can say that I am by no means certain he has inherent capacity to manage country during this critical period. My clear impression, moreover, is that each passing day of indecisiveness is bound to lessen any confidence that people may have in his government.

3. Information from various sources convinces me that Diem's Cabinet must be materially strengthened and in fairly short order. Key positions at the moment are Ministries of Defense and Interior. Perhaps if these posts are filled along lines proposed to Diem by Alessandri (Embtel 1796),[2] such a reshuffle may provide government with necessary reinforcement. However, I have not been here long enough to judge whether, if this proposal were adopted, it would do the trick.

4. I have been impressed with pervasive influence of French in political, economic and military aspects of situation here. Certainly, if expeditionary corps were withdrawn prematurely, results could be disastrous. Similarly, it would be unwise for us to attempt to displace

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[1] Ambassador Donald R. Heath left Vietnam on Nov. 14. Randolph A. Kidder, Counselor of Embassy, served as Chargé d'Affaires pending the appointment of a new Ambassador. This telegram was transmitted in six parts.

[2] See footnote 3, p. 2240.

French capital and French advisers in fields of banking, currency controls and allied business matters. Any such move could impose on us obligations which might be onerous and long drawn out as those we assumed in Philippines and Korea.

5. In military field, most pressing problems are to determine size and structure of Vietnamese army and define its mission. I have been concentrating on these problems.

6. General Ely has questioned validity of our assumption that we can rely on threat of action under Manila pact to dissuade Viet Minh from renewing military operations against free Vietnam. I agree with him that until after the period now scheduled for elections, it will be necessary maintain sufficient combat forces, both French and Vietnamese, to furnish reasonable assurance that country could not be quickly overrun pending action by Manila pact powers. I therefore believe we should continue furnish some support to FEC during this period.

7. I am convinced as is General O'Daniel also that if we did not include within Vietnamese army some combat forces capable of taking to the field, morale effect on both Vietnamese people and army would be very bad, and this omission would be exploited to our disadvantage by Viet Minh. Vietnamese army, despite its failing, is the only organized, cohesive indigenous force in country. To propose to cut in half its present strength, and at same time make no provision for true combat forces, is accordingly not practicable solution in light of existing situation and would be unacceptable to Vietnamese. It will probably be very difficult to obtain Diem's acceptance of sharp reduction in forces I will propose as outlined in part two this message.

8. Fairly well balanced Vietnamese defense forces, designed primarily to establish and maintain internal security, and yet incorporating a small blocking force, can be created within ceiling of 90,000 men at an annual cost to United States of about 200 million dollars. Though inclusion of combat force within Vietnamese army is contrary to concept outlined in numbered paragraph 2 of my terms of reference,[3] I feel this must nevertheless be done. Such force would be prepared not only to assist FEC in event of renewal of hostilities but might also be necessary in order to reinforce those units normally assigned to maintain internal security.

9. It should be noted that in the force table outlined in part two no provision is made for a constabulary. The territorial divisions indicated are for the purpose of maintaining internal security moreover the present military forces of the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao and other groups would be incorporated into the territorial divisions and made a part of the national army. Thus the army would be the only military land force

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[3] See letter from the President to General Collins, Nov. 3, p. 2205.

in the country except for a small police force which would come under the control of the Minister of Interior.

It may be necessary to modify this concept after coordination with Vietnamese authorities.

Part Two.

1. Following is my recommended Vietnam force basis for FY 1956. Accompanying cost estimate is based on assumption that initial equipment is on hand here.

(*a*) *Army*
(1) National HQ 2500
(2) Three territorial Div HQ at 800 each 2400
(3) 13 security Regt HQ at 200 each 2600
(4) 39 security Bns at 500 each 19500
(5) Three field Divs at 8450 each 25350.

Each Div comprises HQ 200; 3 light Regts 2350 each; 105 Howitzer Bn 400; Sig Co 160; RCN Co 90; Pioneer Co 150; Trans Co 150; Maint Co 125; Med Co 125. Each Lt Regt consists of HQ 150; 3 Lt Bns at 700 each 2100; Hvy Co 100.

(6) 1 ABN RCT 3700
(7) Army troops 11635
(8) Com troops 3000 military; 4000 civilian
(9) Schools and camps 3000
(10) Pipeline 4000
(11) Total army 77,685 military; 4000 civilian
(12) FY 1956 estimated cost army $172,580,000

(*b*) *Navy*
(1) HQ, staffs, SVs 700 military, 250 civilian.
(2) Training school 400
(3) Ships crews 1900
(4) Total navy 3000 military; 250 civilian.
(5) FY 1956 estimated cost navy $10,039,000

(*c*) *Air Force*
(1) HQ, staffs, SVC 1000 military; 150 civilian
(2) Two Ln Sqns and one Trans Sqn 2000
(3) Total Air Force 3000 military; 150 civilian
(4) FY 1956 estimated cost Air Force $10,529,000
(5) *Note:* During second year add one Ftr Sqn, one Trans Sqn, 1,000 men.

d. Total armed forces 83,685 military; 4,400 civilian.
e. FY 56 estimated total cost armed forces $193,148,000
f. FY 56 estimated cost MAAG operations including salaries 150 US civilians $8,500,000
g. FY 56 estimated cost $201,648,000

2. It will be recognized that Vietnam forces, primarily army, must be reduced from current strength of roughly 170,000 to accord with recommended structure. I visualize this reduction as a selective discharge process designed to retain cream of officers, NCOs, specialists

and units. Process will require roughly six months including necessary redeployment. Acceleration of reduction considered neither practicable nor desirable due to administrative complications and damaging effect on morale. Cost of US support during remainder fiscal 55 has not yet been computed but will probably run in neighborhood of $100 million. This will, of course, be an expense to be borne during second half of FY 55 and is over and above cost of recommended structure for FY 56.

3. I would emphasize that while recommended armed forces for FY 56 reflects structure of six divisions, it is basically an internal security force. Territorial divisions are essentially existing regional commands so organized as to provide one or two security battalions for each province under security regiments now represented by various intermediate headquarters. Three field divisions provide mobile elements required to reinforce provincial units and provide shield in event of aggression. Latter role is essential to prevent rapid overrunning of country before outside assistance can be brought to bear. Both territorial and field forces will serve as basis for peacetime development of reserve units which in turn will enable expansion in time of national emergency. Six division formula also serves as means of overcoming at least in part Vietnamese and French concern and disappointment over our stand against their plans for 10 Vietnam divisions in addition to large territorial security force.

4. Special attention is invited to fact that nearly 80 percent of estimated FY 56 cost is attributable to food, clothing, pay and allowances. $5.70 per man per day is currently expended on these items. Much as I should prefer to insist on important reduction these costs, which have applied for some two years, I consider that such action if carried out would produce irreparable harm in terms lowered morale during critical period now to 1 July 56. Solution in future years must lie in restoration of national military service. In this way hard corps of regulars can be retained on current high pay scales while conscript pay can be drastically reduced.

5. No militia has been included in FY 56 structure. I consider that role these essentially home guard elements should be fulfilled by local volunteers and police.

Part Three. Development and training of autonomous Vietnam armed forces.

1. Two requisites for effective development of the Vietnam force structure outlined in part two are:

(*a*) Autonomy of command i.e. actual command of Vietnamese forces by Vietnamese, and;

(*b*) US responsibility for organization and training. French must cooperate fully in their independent action.

2. To this end I have had prepared a minute of understanding which I presented in draft to General Ely today (see part four for summary of meeting). Minute provides that:

(*a*) Force structure outlined part two above would be attained by 1 July 1955;
(*b*) Full autonomy would be granted by France to Vietnam armed forces not later than 1 July 1955;
(*c*) US would assume responsibility for advising government of Vietnam in organization and training of its armed forces on 1 January 1955, exercise of responsibility to be entrusted to Chief, US MAAG;
(*d*) Utilization of French training personnel is desirable and necessary, and would be under MAAG direction;
(*e*) Since he has overall responsibility for military security of Vietnam, he will have to be assured that organization and training are in accord with an agreed operational concept approved by him;
(*f*) Some initial reliance would be placed on French training and adviser personnel, but they would be phased out as US MAAG capability increased;
(*g*) Above arrangements subject to consent of government of Vietnam.

3. General Ely told me he agreed with the concept contained in the minute but wished to study it further. I am meeting with him again tomorrow morning. Later today an aide called to say General Ely had seen a translation of minute, wished to discuss it in detail, and asked that Washington not be advised he had approved it.

Part Four. Reaction of Ely.

1. I met with Ely 15 November and had a thorough discussion of concepts outlined in part 1 above and of details of programs outlined in parts 2 and 3. Ely's reaction as follows:

(*a*) He stated he was prepared to agree to our force structure plan. In fact he believed the 200,000 man force proposed by the Vietnamese was too high. Our plan, he said, would be difficult to sell to the Vietnamese.
(*b*) It has always been French intention to reduce FEC as Vietnam forces are built up. However, reduced levels of Vietnam forces in our plan will require restudy of phase out FEC.
(*c*) He agreed with concept that Vietnam forces should be capable of withstanding initial shock of external attack while Manila pact powers prepared to act. However, actual defense arrangements under this concept would have to be discussed further.
(*d*) He approved of the concept of light divisions as included in our proposal.
(*e*) In reply to my question whether he would agree on increase of the 342 US military forces to which the MAAG would be limited under an overly strict interpretation of Geneva agreement, he agreed that this could be done but cautioned against Viet Minh reaction. Said such increase should be done gradually and quietly.

(*f*) He specifically agreed that the US should take over full responsibility for organization and training of Vietnam forces and that French trainers and advisers would be under MAAG direction, but emphasized need for close liaison between chief, MAAG and himself with which I concurred.

2. I expect further to develop Ely's position during our meeting 16 November.

3. Late today I discussed with Diem the broad concepts and programs outlined in parts 1, 2, and 3 above. His initial reaction was in general favorable, but I am not sure he grasped all the implications of the presentation.

Part Five. US support for FEC.

1. Reference Deptel 1875.[4] As indicated in part 1 this message, I am in general agreement with views expressed by Heath in Embtel 1761 [5] to effect that US should continue some financial support to FEC during 1955. We believe French are under impression they will receive such support and that failure on our part to provide it would make it difficult for us to obtain full French cooperation which we consider essential to success of our military and economic aid programs.

2. I am not prepared at present, however, to recommend exact force level to which FEC should be reduced by January 1, 1956 nor precise dollar contribution which should be made toward support of FEC during calendar 1955. I recommend that this figure, however, be not less than 100 million.

3. I told Ely this morning that I believed at least some part of the FEC should be maintained here until date scheduled for Vietnamese elections and that I was ready to recommend to my government that US continue contribute to its financial support during that period, but mentioned no figures. However, I felt sure funds for the purpose would be smaller than hitherto.

Part Six. Subjects for discussion with Mendes-France.

1. Deptel 1939.[6] I believe parts two through five of this message might profitably be discussed with Mendes-France if there is time and if he is accompanied by appropriate experts. Their order of importance for such discussion seems to me to be:

(*a*) US support for FEC;

(*b*) French concept of mission of FEC during present period;

(*c*) Our proposals for organization and training of autonomous Vietnamese forces;

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[4] Sent also to Paris as telegram 1692, Nov. 5, p. 2215.

[5] Dated Nov. 8, p. 2224.

[6] Telegram 1939 to Saigon, Nov. 11, requesting the views of General Collins on the Vietnam situation in preparation for the talks with Premier Mendès-France, is not printed. (120.251G/11-1154)

(*d*) Our recommendations re Vietnamese armed force levels, together with strategic concept back of reduced national army and FEC (i.e., Manila pact);

(*e*) Recovery by US of excess MDAP material (Embtel 1793 November 10).[7]

2. While I believe point (*a*) should be resolved in such manner as to permit retention in Vietnam of some portion of FEC, as discussed in parts one and five this message not all the elements entering into problem are available here.

3. With respect to French attitude toward Diem Government, I think that nothing should be said to imply any faltering in our support for Prime Minister, but we should leave initiative with Mendes to bring up question if he wishes do so.

KIDDER

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[7] Telegram 1793 from Saigon, Nov. 10, not printed, contained a draft minute of understanding proposed by General Collins regarding the recovery by the United States of MDAP material no longer needed by the French for the prosecution of the war. Under the terms of the draft note, General O'Daniel and General Ely would consult as soon as possible regarding the disposition of this equipment. (751G.5 MSP/11–1054)

120.251G/11–1654: Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, November 16, 1954—3 p. m.

1841. Repeated information Paris 606. Limit distribution. From Collins. Re Deptel 1939.[1]

1. During discussion with Ely fifteenth (Embtel 1830),[2] he made point it was necessary reach US-French agreement with respect to general, not merely military, policies for Vietnam. In this connection he wished particularly know US attitude toward elections scheduled for 1956. He pointed out that clause in Geneva Accord providing for elections is not clear as to whether these are to be held separately in each zone or are to be countrywide. Ely expressed view that while countrywide elections would result in Viet Minh victory, separate balloting might save Free Vietnam.

2. I replied I did not know what US position is regarding elections, but I was aware of US fear that single countrywide election would deliver country to Viet Minh. Ely said he thought we should take no steps publicly indicating opposition to elections. I gave him my present personal thought we should work on assumption that elections north and south would be held separately and on basis as widely divergent as possible and under such conditions as to offer reasonable chance of winning.

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[1] See footnote 6, *supra*.

[2] *Supra*.

3. Ely said Viet Minh forces are, and will remain, stronger than those available to him. If Viet Minh become aware they may not win entire country by elections, they may resort to aggression. Under circumstances, it might be wiser to work out *modus vivendi* between north and south covering particularly economic exchanges. Ely said he had insufficient forces to resist armed Viet Minh attack, and that he feared, moreover, Viet Minh might provoke revolution in south if it should appear National Government was becoming firmly established.

4. Ely went so far as to say he believes Diem does not intend permit elections and that some French believe US is supporting Diem for that reason. I assured Ely we are not backing Diem for any such reason.

5. I recognize this is delicate question but think it should be raised with Mendes if Department judges circumstances favorable. In any event, I request guidance as to whether I should continue hold to line as in page two above in further discussing this matter with Ely.

KIDDER

751G.00/11-1654 : Telegram

The Chargé in France (Achilles) to the Department of State

SECRET PARIS, November 16, 1954—3 p. m.

2091. Repeated information Saigon 299. Embassy officer delivered Department's declaration of policy on Indochina contained in Deptel 1673[1] to Bao Dai orally today. As the same ground had been largely covered in our recent previous conversation, Bao Dai had little to add to what he had said at that time. He fully appreciates U.S. objectives and policies outlined in the declaration and stated categorically that he is prepared to do his share by giving his full support to Ngo Dinh Diem while there is a chance of his succeeding. It was to demonstrate this fact that he had summoned General Hinh to Paris. He noted Department's use of term "a government of national union around Prime Minister Diem" and stated that he interpreted this to mean that we would not outlaw possibility of broadening of present government but at the moment were not prepared to consider a substitute government to replace it. We confirmed this fact. He expressed hope that General Collins as "a new broom" could influence Diem into action.

Bao Dai admitted that his principal concern now was that Hinh not follow orders and return to Paris November 18 as expected. Bao Dai has sent Hinh no further message and does not intend to do so unless he fails to leave on schedule in which case he would take action to discipline him. Bao Dai spoke of not pressing Hinh too much at this time else he "lose face" and use this as another excuse for deferring departure.

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[1] Dated Nov. 5, p. 2213.

In discussing "the formation of a government of national union around Diem", Bao Dai expressed hope that Hinh's absence from Saigon, even if temporary, would make it possible for Diem to reconcile his differences with the sects and other leading Vietnamese personalities with a view to bringing them into his government. We asked Bao Dai what his opinion was of General Alessandri's supposed ideas re broadening government. He thought they were interesting but impractical because they would prove to be unacceptable to Diem. We asked his opinion of incorporating either Buu Hoi or Buu Loc into government. This afforded Bao Dai, as we had hoped, opportunity disavow Buu Hoi which he lost no time in doing on grounds that Vietnam was suffering from a spate of "intellectual" leaders like Buu Hoi and Diem while what she needed were men of action. Vietnam could no longer afford the luxury of the "experiments" of intellectuals, he said. Diem had qualities of character but he must now move into action and could only do so if he permitted others but his brothers to help him.

Bao Dai stated he would remain in Paris for the foreseeable future and hoped to maintain contact with the Embassy as things developed.

ACHILLES

751G.00/11–1654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Canada (Stuart) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY OTTAWA, November 16, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received November 17—1:59 a. m.]

102. Mendes-France met today with Prime Minister and Canadian officials to discuss Europe and Indochina.[1] Expressed confidence he could obtain ratification agreements otherwise his comments European situation had no particular significance. In Mendes' view given fairly satisfactory conditions the future of Laos and Cambodia as independent frail political entities (like Burma) can be assured. He

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[1] Premier Mendès-France visited Canada en route to Washington for conversations with U.S. officials, Nov. 18–20. On the afternoon of Nov. 17, Lester B. Pearson, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, briefed Secretary Dulles by telephone on the Canadian talks with Mendès-France. Dulles' office record of that conversation read in part as follows: "P. is worried about Indochina and they told MF they would go along to try to work things out on the Commission without forcing the issue, but the time may come soon when unless there is some change on the part of Poland, they may have to force some issues. MF said the situation is not any worse than we might have expected 3–4 months ago. MF is worried most about Northern Laos and the weakness of the Government in the South. He was not too much of an alarmist and was full of determination to push things through." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations") Telegram 105 from Ottawa, Nov. 18, provided additional information on the Mendès-France talks in Canada. (751G.00/11–1854) Finally, in Washington on Nov. 18, Canadian Minister Glazebrook briefed William J. Galloway, Special Assistant to the Counselor, on the same subject. Galloway's memorandum of that conversation is in file 751G.00/11–1854.

still has misgivings about two northern provinces of Laos where not even the spirit of the armistice has been observed but notes that they have long been in precarious condition contiguous to hostile territory. He commented also on the difficulty of surveying the situation in northern Laos.

Regarding Vietnam he said that any observer at the time of the armistice could have reached the conclusion that the situation four months later would be no better than it actually is. He is seriously worried over Vietnam although he said that given a more popular form of government there might be a faint hope of building up a solid democratic front.

Canadians surprised to hear him say that he had found Ho Chi-Minh not completely uncooperative. He gave various instances of cooperation such as supply of coal from Hanoi to Haiphong. Also French representative Hanoi while not officially recognized is being given VIP status by Viet Minh. Mendes believes that we will have real clue to Viet Minh intentions when Haiphong finally handed over.

In general Mendes felt that our best chance was through "Politique de Souplesse".

Mendes indicated that he is particularly worried over Ngo Dinh Diem and intends to discuss that situation particularly with the Secretary. Will also discuss proposed SEATO meeting in Bangkok called to consider Vietnam elections and believes it unwise proceed too quickly with this. Canadians hitherto unaware of this project.

Canadians observed that Mendes seems fully aware of realities of US [illegible] and the situation of the administration vis-à-vis various shades of opinion. He also recognizes the importance of the US and welcomes American power in Southeast Asia but feels that France has had much more experience in that theater than we have.

STUART

120.251G/11-1654 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, November 16, 1954—11 p. m.
[Received November 17—1:55 p. m.]

1854. Department pass Defense. From Collins.

Part One.

1. I met with Ely this morning at his request. He desired to discuss US assumption military training responsibilities and general French-US policy here.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in three parts.

2. First he discussed minute of understanding which I mentioned in part three, Embtel 1830.[2] Minute which I proposed follows:

"Minute of understanding on development and training of autonomous Vietnam armed forces.

"1. With respect to fulfillment by the Government of the United States of a program of direct aid to the state of Vietnam, the parties to this understanding are in accord that the initial Vietnam force structure to be attained by 1 July 1955, and maintained by the United States for one year thereafter, will be as shown at enclosure A thereto (see part two, Embtel 1830). The United States agrees to support the Vietnam armed forces while the current strength of those forces is being reduced, through self discharge as far as possible of the least effective personnel, until the structure defined in enclosure A is achieved.

"2. It is agreed in connection with the foregoing that full autonomy will have been granted by France to the armed forces of the state of Vietnam by not later than 1 July 1955. (For the purpose of this minute 'full autonomy' is understood to mean actual command of all units of Vietnam armed forces by Vietnamese personnel.)

"3. The parties to this understanding further agree that full responsibility for assisting the Government of Vietnam in the organization and training of its armed forces will be assumed by the United States on 1 January 1955. Exercise of this responsibility will be entrusted to the Chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG).

"4. Utilization of French personnel to assist in the training of the Vietnam armed forces is recognized as both necessary and desirable for some time. To this end it is agreed that French personnel thus employed will receive their direction from the Chief of the MAAG. Nothing in this arrangement will serve to alter the over-all authority of the Commander-in-Chief in matters relating to the strategic direction of the military efforts of the French and Vietnam armed forces and the Commander-in-Chief's over-all responsibility for the military security of Vietnam against external aggression.

"5. Since attainment of the full training and advisory capability of the MAAG is dependent upon progressive introduction of US personnel, it is understood that initial reliance will be placed largely upon French training and advisory personnel. Once the full MAAG capability has been attained, it is agreed that French training and advisory personnel will be phased out on gradual basis. The time when this will be accomplished will be the subject of further negotiation based on experience as the program develops.

"6. It is understood that the arrangements and agreements set forth herein are subject to the consent of the Government of Vietnam".

3. Ely agreed to procedures enunciated in minute, except for one important point. He said that he cannot accept principle, as stated in paragraph 5 of minute, that all French personnel be removed from advisory positions even though this is done over a period of months.

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[2] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

He maintains that no French Government or Assembly would agree to having US personnel completely replace French in training Vietnamese armed forces. In my opinion this touches on a basic difference in opinion on future French role vis-à-vis the Vietnam armed forces.

4. I used all arguments at my command to dissuade him from this position. I even modified the minute to indicate that date for withdrawal of French [garble] would be negotiated here at some future time. I pointed out need to convince Vietnamese that French really intend to give up influence in armed forces. All to no avail.

5. Ely intends to notify Mendes-France of basic difference between [garble] US on this point.

6. Recommend that this subject be discussed with French Premier and strongly urge US adhere to position taken in the minute of understanding in paragraph 2 above.

Part Two.

1. Ely then raised subject of general policy being pursued by US and France towards Indochina. US policy, he said, now revealing two tendencies:

(*a*) First, is that Vietnam Army should have limited strength capable of performing mission only of internal security, whereas previously US seemed to want France to build up Vietnam Army to replace FEC. He agreed with concept of smaller Vietnam Army, not because he believed in its limited mission, but because he felt Vietnamese could not provide resources and trained personnel to raise force of two hundred thousand.

(*b*) Second tendency of US policy was to expect FEC to defend Vietnam territory against external aggression during critical next two years in face of growing Viet Minh strength which would be three to four times greater, while at same time US was reducing aid necessary to maintenance of FEC. US solution seemed to be only to urge ratification of Manila Pact while not suggesting how military action of Manila Pact powers could be concerted and brought to bear.

(*c*) He wondered whether US was turning to Churchill policy of accommodation with communism, or whether there was contradiction between US policy and US actions here.

2. I outlined my view of concept underlying US policy in this area:

(*a*) First I assured Ely US was not pursuing policy commonly known as appeasement. I expressed opinion that basic assumption in US was that Communists were not likely to renew overt aggression in Indochina, although of course such action was not impossible. Therefore large army forces in Vietnam, which in any case would not alone assure defense of Free Vietnam, were not essential, since major reliance for deterring attack and countering it would have to be placed on collective action under Manila Pact. Naturally, if basic assumption was questioned by Ely, as the Commander-in-Chief concerned with security of his forces and responsible for the security of Vietnam might be inclined to do, his conclusion might be different.

(*b*) I said I appreciated his point of view and for that reason had recommended to my government that US provide some support for FEC for some time to come, and that Vietnam army include a combat corps capable of blocking action in conjunction with FEC against attack.

(*c*) Concept as I saw it was to develop such minimum blocking forces as would convince enemy he would be opposed and could not attack cheaply and easily overrun territory before the signatories of the Manila Pact could take action against the aggressor.

3. Ely stated that French supported the Manila Pact, but pointed out that unlike NATO area no US troops are stationed in Indochina. Communists could not be sure US reaction would be automatic here as it would undoubtedly be if Western Europe were attacked. I conceded that two situations are not identical, but element of risk cannot be eliminated, and that concept of US policy outlined above was as I understood it.

4. Ely as the responsible Commander-in-Chief indicated that he felt the risks inherent in the US concept were too great. However, he said Mendes-France, in light of his world-wide perspective, may agree to reductions in FEC and to small Vietnam force structure under US concept as I outline it.

5. The above may be useful to State and Defense as background in forthcoming discussion with Mendes-France on subjects outlined in Part 6 Embtel 1830, 15 November.

Part Three.

Subject: MAAG Personnel Ceiling.

General Ely agreed that he would permit US to introduce added military personnel for MAAG, above 342 figure now considered by some as top US limit under overly strict interpretation of Geneva accord. Yesterday he indicated that as Commander-in-Chief he would assume responsibility to permit US personnel to fill vacated French spaces if this were done quietly and over a period of months. This would permit US to have as many trainers as we need to do the job here. Ely requested that we go slow on this however and of course consult him as need for added personnel arises.

I submit this solely for Department's information. Ely stated he would prefer not to refer this question to Washington and I strongly recommend that it not be discussed with Mendes-France. If subject arises suggest that Department state that it is a matter which can be worked out here between Ely and me.

KIDDER

Eisenhower Library, Eisenhower papers, Whitman file

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, November 17, 1954.

Subject: General Collins' Recommendations Regarding Military Force Levels in Viet-Nam

General Collins has submitted a report[1] and his recommendations regarding force levels in Viet-Nam. A breakdown of the proposed forces as recommended is attached as Tab A.

In summary, the main points of his report are as follows:

1. It would be disastrous if the French Expeditionary Corps were withdrawn prematurely since otherwise Viet-Nam could be overrun by an enemy attack before the Manila Pact Powers could act.

2. The United States should continue to subsidize the French Expeditionary Corps during calendar year 1955, at least to the degree of one hundred million dollars, to encourage the French to retain sufficient forces. (The current rate of U.S. subsidy is four hundred million annually.)

3. The Vietnamese National Army, now totaling 170,000 should be reduced by July 1955 to 77,000. It should be placed under Vietnamese command and control by that date. It would be organized into six divisions, three of which would be field elements designed to reinforce the balance of the Army which would be stationed in regimental and battalion garrisons throughout the provinces. A small Air Force and Navy is provided for. The cost to the U.S. would be two hundred million dollars annually. (This is less than current costs.)

4. The United States should assume training responsibility for the Viet-Nam National Army by January 1, 1955 with French cooperation and utilizing French trainers.

5. General Ely, the French Commander, is agreeable to a slow build-up of our MAAG for training purposes.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

[Tab A]

RECOMMENDED FORCE LEVELS IN VIET-NAM AS OF JULY 1955

A. *Army*

1) Three Territorial divisional headquarters of 880 [*800*] men each. Total 2,400 men.

2) Thirteen security regimented headquarters of 200 men each. Total 2,600 men.

3) Thirty nine security battalions of 500 men each. Total 19,500.

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[1] See telegram 1830 from Saigon, Nov. 15, p. 2250.

4) Three field divisions of 8,450 each. Total 25,350.

5) Totals:

(*a*) Military—77,685.
(*b*) Civilian—4,000.

6) Estimated costs:—$172,580,000.

B. *Navy*

1) Totals:

(*a*) Military—3,000.
(*b*) Civilian—250.

2) Estimated cost FY 1956:—$10,039,000.

C. *Air Force*

1) Two light squadrons; one transport squadron—2,000 men.

2) Totals:

(*a*) Military—3,000.
(*b*) Civilian—150.

3) Estimated cost FY 1956:—$10,529,000. (During second year would add one fighter squadron and one transport squadron.)

D. *Armed Forces Totals*

(*a*) Military—83,685.
(*b*) Civilian—4,400.
(*c*) Estimated Total Annual Cost:—$193,148,000.

E. *MAAG*

(*a*) Estimated cost operations including salaries 150 U.S. civilians $8,500,000.

F. Total estimated cost FY 1956:—$201,648,000.

G. Estimated cost U.S. support remainder FY 1955:—$100,000,000.

Editorial Note

On November 17, 1954, Pierre Mendès-France, Prime Minister of France, arrived in Washington for three days of conversations with the Secretary of State and other officials of the United States Government. Indochina was a major topic of discussion at the following sessions: meeting between Secretary Dulles and Premier Mendès-France, November 17, 7 p. m.; the First Plenary Meeting between the Secretary, the Premier, and their advisers, November 18, 3 p. m.; the Second Plenary Meeting, November 19, 10:45 a. m.; the Third Plenary Meeting, November 19, 3:30 p. m.; and the Fourth Plenary Meeting, November 20, 10:30 a. m.

For the memorandum of the Dulles–Mendès-France exchange on Indochina, November 17, see *infra*. For summaries of aspects of the conversations with Mendès-France regarding Indochina, see the following telegrams to Saigon: 2070, November 22, page 2277; 2112, November 24, page 2303; and 2126, November 26, page 2306. Other telegrams to Saigon concerning the talks include the following: 2046, November 19, page 2271; 2055, November 20, page 2274; and 2056, November 20, page 2275.

For a comprehensive record of all the meetings held in Washington with Mendès-France, including minutes of the four plenary sessions, during which Indochina was the dominant subject of discussion, see volume VI. Unpublished material on the Mendès-France visit, including position papers prepared on Indochina, may be found in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 398.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 398

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] November 17, 1954.

Subject: Indochina

Participants: The Secretary
M. Mendes-France
Ambassador Bonnet
Livingston T. Merchant

During the course of the Secretary's meeting with the French Premier he raised the question of the 1956 elections in Indochina and inquired as to the Premier's attitude as to the form and manner in which they might be held.

M. Mendes-France replied that he felt it was too early to speak with any finality on this subject and that much would depend upon conditions at the time. His present view was that the elections should be broken down into small local units rather than held on any national scale for a national set of candidates. In the latter case he said it seemed clear that Viet Minh would win whereas he believed that if voting was by precinct or county, good local leaders if found and supported could do a great deal in their own districts between now and 1956 and thereby assure victory for anti-communist candidates in many areas.

Mendes-France then said that the French were continuing to support Diem and they intended loyally to cooperate with the United

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[1] The discussion on Indochina recorded here occurred during the course of a meeting between Secretary Dulles and Premier Mendès-France at Blair House at 7 p. m. For memoranda covering other aspects of their conversation, see volume VI.

States on our agreed policy. He noted, however, that he had only limited faith that Diem had the capacity to succeed. When the Secretary asked him whom they had in mind as a replacement, Mendes-France confessed that this was the great difficulty in that there seemed no logical successor. He refused, however, to consider this fact as justification for regarding any man as indispensable or irreplaceable. The Secretary then urged him to find time to talk to Senator Mansfield which it was agreed would be worked out after dinner tomorrow night. The Secretary referred to Senator Mansfield's knowledge of the area, his great influence in the Senate and the firmness of his conviction that Diem was our last and only hope.

The Secretary went on to say that from our reports from General Collins, he and General Ely were working extremely closely and well together. He asked if the Premier had received any reports from his people since the arrival of General Collins in Indochina. M. Mendes-France said that some reports had just come in but that he had not yet read them. He mentioned the Collins minute,[2] which he described as "controversial". The Secretary suggested that the Premier go over his own reports overnight so that they could compare notes the following day.

At this point Mendes-France raised with emphasis the importance of giving the Viet Minh no pretext for reopening hostilities. He said that their strength had been built up since July whereas the Viet Namese National Army had suffered desertions. He also referred in complimentary terms to General Hinh and his position of influence in the army. In reply to the Secretary's question he expressed ignorance as to whether or not Bao Dai's recall of him was the result of French suggestion and pressure. M. Mendes-France said that the military position of the French in Indochina was weak and that they were in no position to halt an invasion of south Viet Nam if the war started again. In consequence it was important that the Viet Minh be given no excuse for breaking the armistice on grounds that our side first breached it.

The Secretary replied that he agreed completely that the armistice should be lived up to scrupulously; that the United States had publicly stated that it would respect it and that it would take no action which in our judgment would violate the terms of the agreement. He went on to say in certain aspects the agreement was vague and ambiguous and that we were not aware what, if any, agreements as to its interpretation might have been reached in meetings to which we have not been a party.

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[2] This is presumably a reference to the draft minute of understanding contained in telegram 1854 from Saigon, Nov. 16, p. 2259.

The French Premier then said that he wished to raise two specific matters of aid, concerning the details of which he believed we had been informed by our MAAG in Saigon. The first was helicopters. The situation in Northern Laos (which he described at some length) was extremely disturbing and Foreign Minister Pearson in Ottawa had spoken to him of the difficulty of getting the Commission into the area because of lack of transport. He said that the ground was such that helicopters were the only means by which the area could be covered. The Secretary promised to look into the matter but inquired whether light planes such as we have used in Korea might not be the answer, particularly since he understood that helicopters were in short supply as well as extremely expensive.

The second request of the French Premier was for spare parts for American planes in French hands but now grounded in South Viet Nam. The Secretary agreed likewise to look into the status of this request.

M. Mendes-France then reverted to his concern over a possible rupture of the armistice by the Viet Minh if they were given any plausible excuse. He said he was worried over the thought of granting additional military aid to any of the 3 Associated States. He was also concerned over any plans involving an increase in our MAAG mission. He reiterated his belief that we should all act with extreme caution.

751G.00/11-1854 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 18, 1954—7 p. m.

1886. Repeated information Paris 617. Limit distribution. From Collins. Re Paris telegram sent Department 2080, repeated Saigon 298.[1] In conversation, November 15, with Ely, he stated since French Union forces here were much weaker than those of Viet Minh, it might be wise to consider a political settlement with Viet Minh, as an alternative to a possible military show-down which might develop in event Viet Minh become convinced they would not win elections. I questioned him sharply as to what he meant by a "political solution". With a somewhat guilty expression, Ely replied that he was not thinking of what I possibly was afraid of. (I feel sure he was aware of US concern re Sainteny mission). He elaborated he did not mean that Vietnam should be handed over to Viet Minh but rather that when Vietnam had a strong, stable government comparable to that of Viet Minh, it might be possible for two parts divided nation to co-exist independently in peace. He pointed out South Vietnam possessed excess of foodstuffs while [North] Vietnam cannot feed itself without importing additional food. On other hand South Vietnam could well utilize hard goods, coal and other products of Viet Minh area. Hence, he said, politico-economic solution might be sought to avoid war. For this to succeed, he said, South Vietnam must develop strong government and be backed up by Manila Pact. Moreover, peoples on both sides of 17th parallel must renounce war in favor of such solution. Above adds an amount of confirmation to estimate contained in reference cable. I assume matter will be explored with Mendes-France. Needless to say if Dillon's estimate is correct, this will have profound effect on outcome of my mission Vietnam.

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[1] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2246.

KIDDER

751G.00/11-1854

Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State[1]

SECRET [WASHINGTON,] November 18, 1954.

Subject: The Basic Challenge in Viet-Nam and Indochina

Discussion

There seem to be two basic questions: (1) can Viet-Nam be saved from Communist domination during the next few years, and (2) if not, how much time can we buy and at what expense by the US aid programs. There is so much at flux that I do not believe the United States Government can take any final positions with Mendes-France, nor can we recommend to the President and to you a well determined course of action.

The French position is fluid, as we have recognized for some time and as Paris telegram 2080[2] ably analyzes. If the French are veering towards unification of Viet-Nam under the Communists, then our programs in cooperation with them will be nullified. We have not yet received the fundamental recommendations from General Collins as to his views on whether the US program with French support can hold Free Viet-Nam with a reasonable chance of success. A National Intelligence Estimate is due next week on probable developments in Indochina.[3] The preliminary edition is decidedly pessimistic.

Thus, we will soon have in our hands three of the basic elements on which to formulate courses of action with regard to the fundamental questions: French plans as Mendes-France gives us; General Collins' over-all recommendations; and the National Intelligence Estimate.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. A handwritten notation on the source text read as follows: "Not known whether handed to Secretary to read."

[2] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2246.

[3] See NIE 63-7-54, Nov. 23, p. 2286.

$400 to $500 million for the three Associated States is a large sum in the face of the risks and hazards. I support your view that we need to buy time to make preparations elsewhere. If we do not succeed in building a permanent dyke in Viet-Nam, we can at the same time be shoring up Cambodia, Thailand, Burma and Malaya. I also believe we have not exhausted the possibilities regarding elections in 1956. The alternative may not be hostilities. There may be ways either of holding elections or of postponing them which will continue to gain time in Viet-Nam and perhaps forestall indefinitely a Communist take over, if a program in Free Viet-Nam can build strength.

Recommendation

The purpose of this memorandum is to suggest that in finalizing the talks with Mendes-France you indicate that we are not in a position to give final answers since General Collins has just arrived and we do not have his final recommendations.

751G.5 MSP/11-1954 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, November 19, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 5:34 a. m.]

1891. Repeated information priority Paris 620. From Collins. Reference Department telegram 2027.[1]

1. There are two fundamental principles involved in training problem:

(*a*) Assumption of full responsibility for training by US MAAG preferably not later than January 1, 1955;
(*b*) Complete phase-out of all French training and advisory personnel by some definite date to be determined later.

2. I understand that Mendes-France has not challenged principle (*a*) which is covered in paragraph 3 of proposed minute of understanding. If he should challenge this point, I urge that we not yield.

3. We feel here that principle (*b*) of great importance since it is indissolubly related to French directives in Vietnam and may have serious effects on French-US relationships in Vietnam as well as

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[1] Telegram 2027 to Saigon, Nov. 18, not printed, stated that preliminary discussions had indicated that Mendès-France was opposed to eventual exclusive U.S. training responsibility in Vietnam. The Department of State therefore requested an immediate expression of the views of General Collins on any acceptable modification of the concept set forth in paragraph 5 of Collins' draft minute of understanding (contained in telegram 1854 from Saigon, Nov. 16, p. 2259) which provided for the phasing out of all French training and advisory personnel. (751G.5 MSP/11-1854)

French-US relations with Diem government. I feel we should do everything to convince French that it is part of wisdom for them not only to give complete autonomy to Vietnamese Armed Forces in field of command as stipulated in paragraph 2 of minute, but also to withdraw their influence from military advisory and training fields. I, therefore, urge again that we bargain hard with French to obtain acceptance of principle (*b*). Time of phasing out of their full influence in armed forces will actually depend on conditions in Vietnam one year or eighteen months from now. No one can predict what these conditions will be. I would think, therefore, that paragraph 5 could be accepted by French if they genuinely mean to give Vietnamese Armed Forces true and complete autonomy.

4. If face-saving device is needed in order to answer possible question in French Assembly or if after sharpest bargaining we cannot for any reason obtain agreement on paragraph 5, I would suggest a compromise along following lines:

> "It is recognized that because of uncertainties of future it is not possible to determine now when or if all French training and advisory personnel will be eliminated from Vietnamese Forces. However, all key positions will be occupied by Americans not later than July 1, 1955; by December 31, 1955, French personnel retained will not exceed 10 percent of total training mission."

5. It would appear that above compromise solution could serve to save face for French since it is my understanding that this minute will not be published.

KIDDER

Eisenhower Library, Dulles papers, "Telephone Conversations"

Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Anderson)[1]

[WASHINGTON,] November 19, 1954—8:58 a.m.

The Sec. said he was having a staff meeting on Indochina. Your people—Collins with the strong backing of the JCS—are taking the position that in effect the French have got to be totally phased out from the standpoint of military forces and training. That will be difficult to accomplish but perhaps it can be. The Sec. said he wondered if sufficient thought has been given that if this happens, we take the entire responsibility that the situation will likely be lost. The Sec. is not sure we should be so insistent on sitting alone on this. A. said he is not sure how strong the JCS are on this. They feel not much reliance can be placed on the French. The Sec. said that is right, but if we do this, the French will plaster us with the responsibility all over the world and try to sabotage the result—they are still powerful there. If we fail, it will be a terrible blow to our prestige in that area. So far we have been able to say the losses in that area have been French failures. The Sec. said we may have to talk along this line today. A. will talk with Hensel before he comes over here, and A. seemed sympathetic to what the Sec. said.

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[1] Drafted by Phyllis D. Bernau of the Secretary's office.

611.51/11–1954 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, November 19, 1954—8:32 p. m.

2046. For General Collins. While we will cable you full summary our talks with Mendes-France on Indochina,[2] we want to send you immediate report of where we stand now with French on question basic US–French relationships in IC, particularly with respect your draft minute on training.[3]

Mendes-France made clear that French are strongly opposed to concept set forth paras 3, 4, and 5 of your draft minute, particularly re US assuming complete charge of training and replacing French personnel and influence. While objecting to replacement French personnel, French at same time attempted to establish for the record that primary responsibility for policy in FE including IC rested with US.

We do not wish to be saddled with full responsibility for what happens in Vietnam because prospective developments there are very dubious. Furthermore, it seems clear that if Vietnam is to be saved it will require full French cooperation. Our feeling is that if we force them and if they finally agree to accepting replacement French personnel (which we do not believe they are willing to do) it would be only a nominal agreement which would create serious difficulties for us with the French and saddle us with the full burden.

With above factors in mind it was agreed to refer draft minute back to you and General Ely to see if you both can come up with agreed recommendation. Mendes-France said Paris would back whatever you both agree to. For reasons stated above it is important any agreement reached not imply that we have primary responsibility for saving free Vietnam.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by MacArthur and Young.
[2] See editorial note, p. 2264.
[3] See telegram 1854 from Saigon, Nov. 16, p. 2259.

751G.13/11–2054 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 20, 1954—3 p. m.

1906. Repeated information Paris 624. From Collins.

1. I broached this morning with Diem question of promptly appointing Ministers of Defense and Interior and delegating full powers to them. I mentioned Quat as leading candidate for Defense. Diem indicated Sects opposed Quat because of actions he took against them during previous term as Defense Minister and said that Deputy Defense Minister Minh had advised against naming Quat because of latter's personal enmity for Hinh. I replied that from all indications Quat was first rate man and if he had full authority Hinh would be obliged to subordinate himself to him. I added that I had been impressed by Minh and hoped he might remain as Deputy to form strong team with Quat and General Vy. At close conversation Diem said he anticipated Quat's return from France today or tomorrow and he would definitely discuss with him possibility of Quat's becoming Defense Minister.

2. Diem said he had reservations about General Vy who, he says, is not a man of character and moreover is pro-Hinh. Diem reproaches Vy for certain actions by military against civil authority in center Vietnam. This part of conversation was inconclusive.

3. With respect to Interior, Diem said he had no one in sight. Nobody except himself had adequate knowledge of both center and south Vietnam. Moreover, he felt he must have one important operating Ministry in his own hands. I suggested that if he felt he must retain one Ministry more suitable one for Prime Minister might be that of Reforms in which he could assert long range leadership and do much to shape future of his country. Various names were canvassed, but Diem declared most were inadmissible and none was universally acceptable. Tam in particular he rejected as being both corrupt and pro-French and in consequence complete antithesis of what Diem government represents. I shall follow up on this question next few days.

4. On leaving, I said I hoped to come back next week to explore with Diem question of early constitution of National Assembly.

KIDDER

751G.00/11–2054 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 20, 1954—3 p. m.

1911. Repeated information Paris 623. From Collins.

1. Foreign Minister Tran Van Do called on me yesterday at his request. Ostensible purpose his visit was inquire whether we had any

information re source of recent "troubles" in Hoa Hao provinces where there is Cambodian minority, and if we knew whether such "troubles" were in any way related to similar disturbances in Cambodia and Laos. Do implied minorities might have been armed by French specifically to create disorder. I assured Do we had no knowledge of alleged episodes, adding I had faith in Ely and could not believe he would countenance French participation in underhand operations.

2. I took occasion of Do's visit to outline our thinking re development and organization of Vietnamese Armed Forces and defense of the territory. I said it seemed to us that by critical period of scheduled elections, free Vietnamese forces could not have been developed sufficiently to be able alone to offer effective resistance to Viet Minh if latter should resort to aggression and that continued presence of FEC would probably be necessary. Do expressed opinion elections should not be held since, because of greater population of north, free Vietnam would surely lose. Accordingly, he felt FEC should be maintained to dissuade Viet Minh from launching armed attack.

3. Do then turned to what I believe was real purpose of visit. He said that following Hinh's departure and Diem's broadcast appeal for national unity, and drawing on sense of strength government had gained from assurances of support I gave in press conference 17th,[1] Prime Minister must move promptly to strengthen his government. I agreed wholeheartedly with this view and said we believed key Ministries of Defense and Interior should quickly be entrusted to strong men.

4. During conversation on this subject, Do said acceptable choices for Interior might be Nguyen Ngoc Tho, former Secretary of State for Interior, or Tran Van Lam, present Government delegate for south Vietnam. In reply to question, he said Tran Van Li, former Governor of Center, would not be satisfactory. When Tam's name was broached, Do said Diem would never agree to him; added that Tam's vaunted efficiency as Prime Minister had been attributable to his control over army and police, and that under present circumstances he could no longer be efficient. Question of filling Interior Ministry raises problem of sects and Binh Xuyen. Do said he believed question of Cao Dai and Hoa Hao representation in government could be satisfactorily resolved only when national assembly had been set up. Assembly could act to reduce their present Cabinet representation of four seats each and still through assembly membership give them reasonable voice in affairs. Since Binh Xuyen control police and covet Interior Ministry, we sug-

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[1] On Nov. 16, President Diem issued an appeal to all Vietnamese to rally to the support of the government. His statement was summarized in telegram 1893 from Saigon, Nov. 19. (751G.00/11-1954) General Collins held a press conference on Nov. 17 during which he emphasized that it was the policy of the United States to back the Diem government. (Joint Weeka No. 47 from Saigon, Nov. 20; 751G.00(W)/11-2054) In telegram 1915 from Saigon, Nov. 20, the Embassy reported that on the previous day, Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh had departed for France. (751G.551/11-2054)

gested Binh Xuyen might be offered Deputy Ministership under strong man loyal to Diem. Do said this might be feasible.

5. Do believes Phan Huy Quat should have Defense, Ministry he has held before and where he has left many friends. In reply to our question whether Quat might be more useful in Interior, Do replied that Quat was needed in Defense and that in any case a southerner should have Interior.

6. Do believes national assembly should be set up as quickly as possible. Meanwhile Defense and Interior can be strongly manned. After assembly is created, further steps can be taken to strengthen Cabinet. I remarked that men named to Defense and Interior must be given full authority. Do agreed and said he felt sure that as Diem's hand became stronger over army, sects and police, he would be willing progressively delegate greater powers to his subordinates.

KIDDER

611.51/11–2054 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET
PRIORITY

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1954—3:03 p. m.

2055. Following is the verbatim text of common instructions addressed respectively by Prime Minister Mendes-France and Secretary Dulles to French and US representatives in the three Associated States:

> As a result of our discussions in Washington we wish to inform you of our observations and to supplement the Minute of Understanding of Sept. 29, 1954, reached between M. LaChambre and General Smith.[2]
>
> 1. We recognize that close cooperation is essential between our two Governments at all levels in order to carry out our objectives. We have decided to hold periodic bilateral discussions in Washington at a high level to review developments, exchange information and evaluate progress.
>
> 2. Our primary concern is to promote the maximum effectiveness of our actions with respect to the three Associated States in order that they shall be vigorous and free. We recognize that competition between our two countries and our respective representatives would hinder progress. It is not the purpose of the United States to seek itself to supplant France in the three Associated States.
>
> 3. Therefore, we reaffirm the necessity for coordination between our representatives in the field and at local levels. We recognize that the methods and procedures for coordination should be kept as flexible as possible and should not become so rigid or restrictive as to prevent effective action from being taken.

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[1] Drafted by Young. Also sent priority to Phnom Penh as 159, to Vientiane as 105, and to Paris for information as 1868.

[2] For text, see Tosec 8, Sept. 30, p. 2100.

4. As regards paragraph 3 of Minute of Understanding of Sept. 29, 1954, it is understood that coordination is for the purpose of exchanging views and information. It should be achieved through informal and *ad hoc* discussions. These could, as appropriate, include interested officials of the Associated States, French representatives, United States field mission and others such as the United Kingdom, Australia, etc. The purpose is to avoid duplication or waste of effort.

In order to promote the achievement of common understanding, informal exchange of views between United States and French representatives shall precede any major decision. You are requested to make the appropriate detailed arrangements as soon as possible to carry out such cooperation. Such arrangements should take into account existing procedures and agreements established with the Associated States.

5. You are requested to provide appropriate guidance on the purposes of this message to respective French and American staffs in the three Associated States.

DULLES

751G.5 MSP/11-2054: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 20, 1954—3:15 p. m.

2056. For Collins. In talks with French Secretary has in general terms indicated our conclusions on amount financial support for FEC calendar 1955 should be reached after taking account likely cost related security programs Indochina and elsewhere Far East. We endeavoring same time give fullest support your recommendations and tentatively plan inform French here next week of $100 million figure for support FEC calendar 1955 in order prevent their assumption that higher figure will be forthcoming.

Note your estimate at least $240 million would be required calendar 1955 support Vietnamese forces during transition period and at reduced levels outlined your 1830.[2] Must also take account financial support upwards $100 million for combined Laotian and Cambodian forces plus another estimated $100 million for rehabilitation and refugee programs in three states.

We must assess possibilities ultimate success in Indochina with estimated expenditures exceeding half billion dollars year versus possible results from similar investment elsewhere. Aid to Southeast Asia in our view must be apportioned among various countries on basis priority and probable chances of success commensurate with investment. We concerned likelihood success in your selling new force plan to Vietnamese themselves which involves scaling down financial costs next year in support military effort at level described your 1830.

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[1] Drafted by Beigel of WE. Repeated to Paris for information as telegram 1869.
[2] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

What timetable do you envisage for talks with Vietnamese to sell them on new force plan?

If we would propose devote less than $440 million for combined military forces support Indochina during coming calendar year what would your present thinking be on where such financial cuts might best be applied, whether to forces Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia or FEC?

Presently plan speak to French here Tuesday [3] and would if possible like any comments you may have by then.

In any discussions with Vietnamese on this matter please bear in mind joint instructions being sent separate telegram today.[4]

DULLES

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[3] Nov. 23.

[4] *Supra.*

751G.00/11-2254 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, November 22, 1954—6 p. m.

131. Repeated information Saigon 192, Phnom Penh unn. Souvanna Phouma informed British, French and myself today that Royal Army outpost in Phongsaly province had been attacked November 20 by force of about 200 Pathet Laos and Viets. He is awaiting further details re casualties, circumstances, etc., but is sending to chairman ICC today request for immediate investigation. There have been several similar incidents during past three months but this one is on somewhat larger scale and is first to occur after supposed withdrawal Viets, which according their radio had already been completed November 16.

ICC will doubtless investigate but, if usual pattern followed, will arrive too late to ascertain facts. (We recommend, nevertheless, no publicity until ICC has at least had opportunity to investigate). Indian chairman informed me Saturday [1] he was "morally certain" all Viets withdrawn but had not yet received final reports from ICC teams in north. We surmise organized Viet units may have withdrawn but have left cadres with Pathet Lao.

Incidents of this kind almost certain to recur in two northern provinces as long as two armed forces confront each other and jurisdiction over provinces remains unsettled. As soon as new government takes office we would hope it would take following steps: (1) Attempt to ascertain directly from Pathet Lao whether they are prepared to demobilize and turn over administration two provinces, in exchange for promised share in administration these provinces and renewed assurances re reprisals, democratic rights and free participation in elections; (2) if Pathet refuse, appeal to world public through circular note to Geneva signatories, perhaps appeal to UN, etc.; (3) if this fails to shake Pathets, reoccupation of provinces by force. Latter step could probably be carried out relatively painlessly now (Pathet troops estimated about 2,000), whereas if left in prolonged control they will grow in strength and eventually commence infiltration into neighboring provinces.[2]

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[1] Nov. 20.

During same conversation Souvanna denounced in strong terms ineffectiveness of ICC and said he felt it is accomplishing no useful purpose and believes new government will request its numbers be drastically reduced, particularly in Vientiane and south.

YOST

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[2] In telegram 116 to Vientiane, Nov. 26, the Department of State stated that even if legal recourse through the ICC or Geneva powers proved unsatisfactory, the United States should not give advice which might result in the resumption of hostilities. (751G.00/11-2254)

611.51/11-2254 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 22, 1954—8:04 p. m.
PRIORITY

2070. Re Secretary's talks with Mendes-France on Indochina,[2] there follows summary of general aspects concerning all three missions three Associated States. Supplemental telegrams will follow concerning specific matters each country, particularly Vietnam.

A. *General Objectives.* Mendes-France reaffirmed French agreement on understandings reached in September talks in Washington. Common instructions are supplement to Minute of Understanding of Sept. 29 (Deptel 2055 to Saigon, rptd Phnom Penh 159, Vientiane 105 and Paris 1868).[3] Mendes-France and Secretary each stated respective national policy is to strengthen independence and freedom each Associated State. On critical question of Vietnam, Mendes-France reaffirmed French policy assist in building strong free Vietnam as counterpart to Communist North. He opposed any "north-south mixture". Secretary stated compromise with Communist could mean loss of area. US objective is if possible to build indigenous power, authority and military strength within the formula of national independence, which will mean gradual lessening of French role and activity. Secretary frankly put the question as to how much effort and resources US could or should put into Indochina in view of heavy risks there and valid competing claims on our resources in other areas in Asia. He stressed need for political stability to make military and other aid programs effective.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Also sent priority to Phnom Penh as 161, to Vientiane as 108, and to Paris for information as 1891.

[2] See editorial note, p. 2264.

[3] Dated Nov. 20, p. 2274.

B. *US-French Relations.* Mendes-France showed particular sensitivity to any actions tending to liquidate French position in Indochina. This theme reappeared constantly during three plenary sessions, with particular reference to US training and advice for indigenous military forces and US technical assistance programs for Cambodians and Vietnamese in US. Mendes-France strongly questioned propriety and necessity of US assuming exclusive role in either case. He recognized US primary responsibility in Asia but emphasized French can make contribution. Secretary replied FE responsibility not exclusively US: cited UK in Malaya, France in IC and US north Asia, Formosa. Mendes-France pointed out demoralizing contrast that would profoundly affect French in Indochina as well as in France of transfer of everything from French to American influence and responsibility while continuing to use French forces to defend Indochina. Secretary stressed that positive results could be achieved in Indochina only by closest cooperation between France and US and by French participation. The US was not disregarding interests of the French people for removal French would create vacuum in Indochina which Communists would rapidly fill. US had no desire itself to supplant the French position in Indochina, but believed French authority and control would be replaced by indigenous forces. Our purpose in Indochina is not to compete with French for influence and popularity but to try to save Free Vietnam. Secretary hoped French held similar view and would not think in terms popularity contest. Mendes-France indicated agreement. Both Secretary and Mendes-France agreed respective personnel should be advised work closely together.

C. *Coordination of Aid.* Mendes-France was disturbed that no machinery had been set up and that aid was still uncoordinated. He pressed for formal tripartite committees and periodic review at governmental level. Secretary agreed to such review but rejected fixed machinery of formal tripartite, bipartite committees for field coordination. He preferred to leave to informal methods of coordination by respective representatives in the field in cooperation with appropriate official local governments. Secretary stressed flexibility safer course at this time than formalized machinery while situation still unclear. He agreed on need for French and US representatives work closely and informally together to avoid overlapping and any tendency on part of local governments play French and Americans off against each other.

Mendes-France did not insist on agreement on tripartite machinery but stressed importance of advance information and preparation between French and Americans before decisions reached or made public. Mendes-France also suggested bringing UK into coordinating committees. Secretary replied suggestion emphasized all more need for flexibility since addition of UK would lead to request from Australia and others to be included making coordinating setup unwieldy. Instead Secretary suggested US and French keep in touch with UK and others where required in some suitable operating relationship. At Secretary's suggestion, drafting committee set up to draft common instructions on how US and French representatives should work together which were subsequently reviewed and accepted (Deptel referred to in para. A). In approving these instructions, Secretary made clear he did not interpret anything in them as requiring fixed tripartite committees, and that US not permanently bound by these instructions as new conditions, such as Manila Pact developments, might require changes in principles in common instructions particularly regarding consultation with other signatories which might require new procedures. Mendes-France replied para. 4 of instructions would continue even after Manila Pact in force. Finally, both Secretary and Mendes agreed consult before changes made.

D. *Manila Pact.* Implementation mentioned in passing in plenary, but we discussed with members French delegation proposals some signatories supported by US set up working group in Washington and hold preliminary meeting Bangkok perhaps in January even before all ratifications final, such meeting not technically to be a council meeting—Secretary did refer Manila Pact formula as deterrent to aggression when discussing security situation with Mendes-France, especially re Vietnam.

DULLES

120.251G/11-2354 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET SAIGON, November 23, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 7:28 a. m.]

1935. Repeated information Paris 631. Department pass Defense. From Collins. In meeting 22 November with Ely, following were major subjects of our discussion:

1. Assumption by US of training responsibility: I referred to brief preliminary information I had received thus far re Washington talks as contained in Deptel 2046,[2] suggested that without awaiting further

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.
[2] Dated Nov. 19, p. 2271.

instructions we move ahead, and proposed that Ely submit his specific changes in minute of understanding on development and training of autonomous Vietnam armed forces (Embtel 1854).[3] Ely said he would prepare his changes at once.

2. Machinery for coordinating aid:

(*a*) After referring to Ely's memo to me of November 17 contained in Embtel 1919,[4] I restated US position saying we intend to coordinate our efforts, but that US must have full responsibility and control over its own aid programs, and cannot agree to committees for regulation of aid. I explained that in our view there should be informal discussions with French and Vietnamese as program progresses rather than formal machinery and that each of us should designate appropriate officials in various fields to engage in such discussions. I would designate Barrows, for example, in economic aid field.

(*b*) Ely said it was clear present US concept somewhat different from that during Smith La Chambre talks, but that in any case French did not question right of each country to give aid as it sees fit, and did not intend that committee should have power to control aid.

(*c*) Since it seemed to me we were in basic agreement, I suggested our representatives discuss each aid project on its merits, and call on Ambassadorial level to discuss projects on which major differences arise, final decision remaining with country giving aid. Ely agreed to designate Bordaz as contact for Barrows to canvass entire aid problem, and similarly to designate officer as contact for General O'Daniel or his representative in matters of military aid.

3. Resettlement of discharged Vietnamese soldiers: Reference Ely memo to me on size and composition Vietnamese forces contained in Embtel 1920,[5] I agreed progressive discharge about one half armed forces would present major resettlement problem, and suggested that as soon as instructions were received from Washington we form study group consisting of representatives French, Vietnamese, and US (MAAG and USOM) to determine what needs to be done. Ely agreed.

4. Recovery of excess MDAP equipment: In accordance with instructions in Deptel 2023, I handed Ely revised minute of understanding on return to US control of certain MDAP equipment.[6] In brief

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[3] Dated Nov. 16, p. 2259.

[4] Telegram 1919 from Saigon, Nov. 21, containing the text of a note from General Ely to General Collins dated Nov. 17, concerning machinery for coordinating economic aid programs of France and the United States, is not printed. (751G.5 MSP/11–2154)

[5] Telegram 1920 from Saigon, Nov. 21, containing the text of a memorandum transmitted by General Ely to General Collins on Nov. 20 regarding the reduction of the size of the Vietnamese army, is not printed. (751G.55/11–2154)

[6] In telegram 2023 to Saigon, Nov. 18, General Collins was authorized to transmit to General Ely an amended version of the draft minute of understanding contained in telegram 1793 from Saigon, Nov. 10. (751G.5 MSP/11–1054) On Dec. 1, Collins and Ely signed the minute of understanding, the text of which had been delineated by telegrams 2023 and 1793. The minute provided for immediate U.S.-French consultation at Saigon to establish procedures for the return to U.S. control of excess MDAP equipment. Collins reported the conclusion of this agreement in telegram 2076 from Saigon, Dec. 3. (751G.5 MSP/12–354)

discussion of problem of US recovery of excesses Ely mentioned inventory of equipment now in progress, and fact that FEC should retain 2 to 3 month reserve stocks on hand in case of resumption of hostilities. I suggested MAAG and EMIFT officers get together promptly to work out recovery procedures. Ely reacted favorably to oral translation of minute, but asked time to study written version.

5. US advisers in Vietnam Army staff: I told Ely that Minh on 19 November had said he was replacing 4 Vietnamese officers from Army staff, and asked if a few US officers could be promptly introduced as advisers to the new Vietnamese officers. Ely agreed that 3 or 4 MAAG officers (now earmarked by General O'Daniel) be placed in advisory capacities in Vietnamese Army staff but before agreeing to their immediate introduction he wanted to study further the full program for integration of US and French trainers and advisers.

6. Removal of US-financed equipment from Tonkin: I reiterated to Ely importance US people and Congress attach to preventing all US-financed equipment, whether publicly or privately owned, from falling into Communist hands. Ely replied this was one of his principal preoccupations and that he intended evacuate from north all MDAP matériel, except that in hands of troops, by January 31. His representatives are now studying minimum requirements of civilian public services which Geneva accords provide must be left in operating condition. Ely foresees some difficulty in removing two USOM financed steam shovels from Charbonnages Du Tonkin, but proposes move ahead on this issue anyhow. He said he would welcome advice from US representatives in Haiphong re any equipment we think should be removed. I repeated that to abandon to Communists any American aid equipment, civil or military, could have profound effect on future US aid.

7. Internal politics:

(*a*) I reminded Ely of our agreement reached during first conversation at Dalat that I would approach Diem re strengthening government, and outlined my conversation of 19 November with Diem (Embtel 1906).[7] Ely replied that he considered Quat one of ablest men available and at an earlier period would have been glad see him as Prime Minister. Now, however, his profound incompatibility with Hinh [*Minh*] is impediment to Quat's becoming Defense Minister. Later in conversation I repeated that for better or worse Diem had declared he would discuss with Quat possibility of latter's taking Defense. Ely agreed that if Hinh [*Minh*] remained as deputy, he and Quat as a team might make a go of it and avoid serious clash with army. Otherwise it might be preferable to name Quat Vice Prime Minister and promote Minh to head Defense Ministry.

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[7] Dated Nov. 20, p. 2272.

(*b*) Ely said that while Minh appeared to wish to adopt conciliatory measures toward army, Diem is giving evidence of wanting make clean sweep of all Hinh supporters. Minh and General Vy are now in Central Vietnam attempting to settle new and dangerous phase of quarrels which have raged for several weeks between rival army factions supporting respectively government and Hinh. Gestures of appeasement by Diem might bring peace, but Ely fears Diem on contrary may goad his opponents to violence. Ely has inkling that Vy may have sworn loyalty to Hinh and his policies and feels that if Prime Minister presses too hard, present Diem Hinh dispute will only be replaced by Diem Vy feud. Already Ely has noted indications that Minh, for supporting Vy, is becoming suspect to Diem. I agreed readily to Ely's suggestion I continue urge Diem follow conciliatory course in dealing with armed forces.

(*c*) Ely said he would continue support Diem as long as I did so, and remarked that Prime Minister's two great qualities are honesty and firmness of purpose; however, latter tends turn into stubbornness and so becomes fault. None of his subordinates is delegated sufficient authority to work as Diem wishes do everything himself. However, his government could be rendered valid if he were content remain as head while handing over operations to two Vice Prime Ministers, one of whom might be Quat. This change plus appointment strong Defense and Interior Ministers would suffice as a beginning.

(*d*) I told Ely I had discussed Interior with Diem, but had got nowhere. Ely reviewed his argument in favor of Tam and said he believed that if Diem insisted on retaining this portfolio, all would be lost. I told Ely I had mentioned Tam's name to Diem who had flatly rejected it, and that I had no intention of raising Tam's name again. I asked Ely what other possibilities there were for Interior. He replied there were Binh Xuyen candidates, but none he could recommend. This phase of conversation ended with Ely's remark that if I could not sell Tam to Diem, no one could. He agreed to furnish me with list of possible candidates for Interior in order of probable effectiveness.

(*e*) Ely said that on 21 November he had lectured General Vy on necessity for cooperating with government. Vy agreed, but said he thought Hinh would return in two weeks. Ely told Vy Hinh's premature return would be contrary to national interest. He said to me it would be catastrophic if Hinh returned too soon. I told him of my request that Embassy Paris intervene with Bao Dai to end that Hinh remain absent several months (Embtel 1917),[8] and asked Ely if he would take similar steps. He agreed to do so. Ely went on to say that Hinh had tried unsuccessfully to establish means of sending coded messages to National Army, and that it appeared Hinh had left order that army should take action against government unless he had returned or sent appropriate message in two weeks. Ely intends confront Vy with this report 23 November.

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[8] In telegram 1917 from Saigon, Nov. 21, not printed, General Collins contended that it was important that General Hinh not return to Vietnam in the near future. Collins requested that Bao Dai be asked to find Hinh a suitable mission which would keep him abroad for several months. (751G.551/11-2154)

(*f*) I referred to National Army radio attacks against government and told Ely we had word certain French officers might have been involved, together with UP stringer, Jean Barre, in providing material for these broadcasts. Ely agreed take action against any French officers implicated.

(*g*) As an afterthought, Ely said Diem's family was very bad influence on Prime Minister, especially brother Nhu and wife.

KIDDER

751G.5 MSP/11-2354: Telegram

The United States Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY NEW YORK, November 23, 1954—noon.
[Received 12:49 p. m.]

285. Repeated information Paris 1. Pass to FOA and Defense from Dillon.[1] Mendes-France asked me to see him Monday evening.[2] He wished to say a word about the financial discussions regarding Indochina which he understands are to be held on Wednesday.

He said that he had purposely left this subject aside during the Washington talks as French public opinion had become very allergic to the connection of aid discussions with political discussions and had developed the feeling that aid in the past had had an undue effect on political decisions.

He said that nevertheless the aid discussions would be most important. He said that he had noticed the obvious contraction in American dollar payments to France over the past months and had realized that it represented a definite policy of the US Govt. He said that he had never mentioned this slow up in France, and it was unknown to the French people. However, by the end of the year it would be necessary to give figures to the assembly committees, and he hoped the matter would be straightened out by then. He said it would make it very difficult for him if the French people thought we were using financial pressure to force French political cooperation in Indo-China.

I told him that from what I knew I was certain that he would find the 1954 settlement very fair. As to 1955 I told him that I understood we were prepared to give some assistance to the FEC but that because of our own budgetary problems it would have to be considerably less than they had hoped for.

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[1] Ambassador Dillon was in New York in connection with the Ninth Session of the UN General Assembly, which had convened on Sept. 23.

[2] Nov. 22.

He said he was not familiar with the figures as he had purposely left all that to Faure, but that he wanted to emphasize the political importance in France of our stretching as far as we could in our 1955 support for the FEC. He said he hoped that we could continue for the French calendar year 1955 to give top priority to Indo-China in the division of our aid allotted to South East Asia. He asked me to pass these brief remarks on to the Secretary and Governor Stassen so that they would realize the importance with which he views the matter.[3]

LODGE

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[3] Upon his return to Paris, Ambassador Dillon transmitted telegram 2218 (Nov. 26) urging that the slowdown in the payment of Indochina aid payments be ended. Dillon contended that it was essential for the United States to support the Mendès-France government in every way pending French ratification of the Paris accords on Germany and European security (concluded on Oct. 23). (751G.5 MSP/11-2654) For extensive documentation on the Paris agreements, see volume v.

In the meantime, on Nov. 24, FOA Director Stassen met at Washington with French Ambassador Bonnet and communicated to him the information that the United States intended to provide $100 million for the support of the FEC for calendar year 1955. Stassen also indicated that the programmed 1954 budget expenditures in respect to the FEC would be continued to the extent of covering that equipment which was actually sent to Indochina by the end of 1955. Bonnet stated that the $100 million figure was far below what the French had expected and was insufficient. For the memorandum of this conversation prepared by Assistant Secretary of Defense Hensel, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 10, pp. 802–805.

751G.00/11-2354

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor (MacArthur)

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] November 23, 1954.

Subject: US-UK-French Meeting on Indochina

Participants: The Secretary
Sir Roger Makins
Mr. MacArthur

At the conclusion of a meeting this afternoon with the Secretary about other matters, Sir Roger Makins said he would like to touch base with the Secretary and find out where we stood with respect to the French request that the U.S., U.K. and France should hold discussions regarding Indochina. Sir Roger made reference to his note to the Secretary of November 19 enclosing a list of subjects which Sir Anthony Eden considered might be discussed.[1] He added that he had inquired briefly of Mendes-France just prior to the latter's departure from Washington whether such tripartite meetings would be agreeable and Mendes-France had replied in the affirmative, saying he had discussed this briefly with Mr. Dulles. The Secretary asked Mr. MacArthur, who had had working level discussions with the French on this, to comment. Mr. MacArthur referred to the meeting held in his office on November 19 in which U.S., U.K. and the French participated.[2] At that meeting, Sir Anthony Eden's request (as outlined in Makins' letter of November 19 to the Secretary) had been discussed. It was agreed that the letter raised two separate issues. The first was preparation for a meeting of the Manila Pact powers, and the second was the question of tripartite discussions on Indochina. With respect to such a tripartite meeting, Mr. MacArthur said that it was his impression that there had been general agreement that any such meeting should be at the technical or working group level rather than at a higher level. While he did not know the position of Mr. Robertson and our Far Eastern people with respect to such a meeting, he had heard no objections voiced to it if the French also were desirous of such a meeting. The Secretary commented that he perceived no objection to a tripartite working level meeting to exchange information on Indochina.

Mr. MacArthur recommended that, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Robertson, we would approach M. Millet of the French Embassy here and refer to the November 19 tripartite meeting in Mr. MacArthur's office. We would inform him that the U.S. had no objection to a tripartite working group meeting at technical level here in Washington to exchange information on Indochina and that we had understood that M. Mendes-France had also given his concurrence to Sir Roger Makins. The meeting could then be set up at the mutual convenience of the participants. Mr. MacArthur recommended very strongly that no publicity be given to such a working group meeting. If it were given any publicity, it might be a cause of concern for the Vietnamese. (Subsequently, Mr. MacArthur told Sir Roger privately that a ticker report from London dated November 22 indicated that "according to authoritative sources", a tripartite meeting on Vietnam would be held in Washington. Mr. MacArthur expressed the hope that the British would maintain a discreet silence.)

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR II

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[1] The note of Nov. 19 is not printed. (751G.00/11-1954)

[2] For documentation on the meeting under reference, see volume XII.

INR–NIE files

National Intelligence Estimate

SECRET WASHINGTON, 23 November 1954.

NIE 63–7–54

PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA THROUGH JULY 1956[1]

THE PROBLEM

To analyze the present strength and weaknesses of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and to assess the outcome in these countries of internal stresses and external pressures and inducements.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The situation in South Vietnam has steadily deteriorated since the conclusion of the armistice. On the basis of present trends, it is highly unlikely that South Vietnam will develop the strength necessary to counter the growing Communist subversion within its borders; it almost certainly would not be able to defeat the Communists in country-wide elections. Even before the elections scheduled for 1956, strong pressures may well arise in South Vietnam for a coalition government with the Viet Minh.

2. As a consequence of the present struggle for political power which erupted almost as soon as Premier Diem came to office, government functions have been paralyzed and the government's authority throughout South Vietnam has become progressively weaker. Deterioration in the Vietnamese National Army has been such that it lacks the capability adequately to perform internal security functions and the French are reluctant to commit their own forces in internal security operations for fear of further antagonizing the population. The capability of the combined Franco-Vietnamese forces for repelling a full scale Viet Minh invasion is low and will decrease as French forces are withdrawn over the next year.

3. In contrast, the Viet Minh is methodically consolidating its control over North Vietnam, is greatly increasing its armed strength by

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[1] According to a note on the cover sheet, this estimate was "Submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence. The following organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

"Concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 23 November 1954. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction."

various measures including the evasion of the armistice terms, and is continuing to develop networks of agents and political cadres in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

4. We believe that the Viet Minh now feels that it can achieve control over all Vietnam without initiating large-scale warfare. Accordingly, we believe that the Communists will exert every effort to attain power in the South through means short of war. Should South Vietnam appear to be gaining in strength or should elections be postponed over Communist objections the Communists probably would step up their subversive and guerrilla activities in the South and if necessary would infiltrate additional armed forces in an effort to gain control over the area. However, we believe that they would be unlikely openly to invade South Vietnam, at least prior to July 1956, the date set for national elections.

5. French policy will be a major factor determining developments in South Vietnam during the period of this estimate. To date French actions have not clearly indicated whether they believe that their local and international interests will be better served by a strong anti-Communist government in South Vietnam with elections postponed if necessary, or by a policy of accommodation with the Viet Minh which they might hope would preserve a French position in Indochina. In spite of Mendes-France's recently expressed desires for a strong South Vietnam, we believe that the French are more likely to adopt the latter course unless the UK agrees to a strong anti-Communist policy for South Vietnam and the US indicates its intention to shoulder the major military burden in Indochina, including a commitment to employ US forces if required.

6. We believe that the Diem government will continue to lack wholehearted French support and that accordingly it will be unable to establish its authority throughout South Vietnam and its tenure of office will remain precarious. No effective successor to Diem is in sight. Those who could be expected to enjoy full French support have little popular following, yet without such support a South Vietnam government would lack the power to exercise authority. Progress in training, reorganizing, and revitalizing the National Army will be slow so long as the political situation remains unstable.

7. The Communists will probably continue to exercise considerable control in the northern provinces of Laos and will retain a capability for subversive activity against the Lao Government. However, we believe the Laotians can limit Communist political advances and that an anti-Communist government will remain in power providing it continues to receive outside assistance and the Viet Minh do not invade or instigate widespread guerrilla warfare. We believe that the nature of Communist aggressive action against Laos will be moderated by

the Communist desire to continue their "peaceful coexistence" line in Asia, particularly directed toward Indian reactions, and to a lesser degree by the possibility of US counteraction.

8. Communist capabilities against Cambodia are somewhat less than against Laos, and the Cambodians will probably be more resolute in resisting subversion. Given outside assistance and the assurance of Western support, Cambodia is likely to maintain internal security and its anti-Communist orientation during the period of this estimate.

9. The fall of South Vietnam to the Viet Minh would greatly increase Communist capabilities against Laos and Cambodia. The extent to which the Communists would exercise this capability would depend almost entirely on their estimate of the probable reactions of the Manila Pact powers and of the neutral countries of South and Southeast Asia.

DISCUSSION

South Vietnam

I. *Present Situation*

10. The political situation in Vietnam south of the 17th parallel is one of almost total paralysis, caused primarily by the struggle for political power between Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem and his supporters on the one hand and a motley array of opposing elements on the other.

11. In the existing situation problems of extreme urgency have been neglected, and the authority of the South Vietnam state has remained nominal. The government has been largely ineffective in meeting vital tasks such as maintaining domestic order, performing the normal functions of civil administration, dealing with the extraordinary problems created by the armistice, and overcoming long-standing problems such as inefficiency and corruption.

12. The Vietnamese National Army is demoralized and disorganized, and its capability even for dealing with internal disorder is low. It lacks trained leadership and an aggressive spirit.

13. On the other hand, the Viet Minh in North Vietnam appears to have adjusted to the post-Geneva phase with continuing and unimpaired confidence. The Viet Minh derived from the Geneva Conference international recognition and greatly enhanced power and prestige. It is methodically consolidating its control over North Vietnam and continuing to plan for the extension of this control over South Vietnam as well. The Communist psychological offensive against the free areas of Indochina continues unabated, and the Viet Minh is continuing to develop networks of agents and political cadres throughout South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

II. *Factors Affecting Developments in South Vietnam*

South Vietnamese Capabilities

Political Factors

14. The conclusion of the armistice greatly weakened non-Communist Vietnam morally and materially. Partition at the 17th parallel is abhorred by all Vietnamese, who regard unity of the three regions of Vietnam as a prerequisite of nationhood. The non-Communist state has been shorn of large territories, important resources, and above all of a considerable segment of its more homogenous and energetic population, particularly the Catholics and anti-Viet Minh nationalists of Tonkin.

15. Moreover, efforts to develop a strong state in South Vietnam are hindered by geographic and ethnic differences and wide social, cultural, and political heterogeneity. Cochinchina, rich and populous, is a mixture of diverse and divergent political, social, and religious forces: the apathetic rice-growing masses of the Mekong Delta; the large urbanized populations in cities like Saigon; the 1,500,000 adherents of the Caodai and the 500,000 adherents of the Hoa Hao, autonomous politico-religious sects which control large areas; the strong and homogeneous groups of Catholics; large overseas Chinese and Cambodian minorities; and approximately 300,000 destitute refugees from North Vietnam. Moreover, coastal south Annam has been in Communist hands without interruption since 1945, and has consequently been subjected to prolonged Communist indoctrination. Finally, the mass of the south Vietnamese have seen such a succession of crises in the last decade that they have become in effect inured to political developments and unresponsive to appeals.

16. Leadership elements in South Vietnam are drawn broadly from the following groups: (*a*) monarchists and court followers close to Bao Dai; (*b*) rich merchants and landlords whose interests are linked with those of French economic groups in Indochina; (*c*) former administrative officials; (*d*) professional men and intellectuals, nationalistic but not given to action; (*e*) a small number of professional politicians and intriguers; (*f*) leaders of the politico-religious sects, warlords who exploit every opportunity for wealth and power; and (*g*) army leadership—personified by General Hinh—a new-comer group whose influence is not completely known. These elements have for years accommodated themselves to French control and to a world of half-peace, half-war. In this climate, expediency has in most instances substituted for integrity and personal aggrandizement for devotion to public service.

17. Power in South Vietnam is spread among the heterogenous elements just described and the French, who still possess the principal military force, the Expeditionary Corps, and who continue to control

foreign exchange and central banking. The Vietnamese National Army remains primarily an instrument of the French High Command. Although Vietnamese governments hold office by virtue of the authority conferred upon them by Bao Dai, they continue to rely upon French power in Vietnam to back their authority. Prime Minister Diem's blatantly nationalistic and openly anti-French attitude has caused many of the French on the scene, confused by a lack of direction from Paris, to assume a hostile attitude toward Diem and to work openly toward depriving him of the power which had supported former Vietnamese Governments.

18. The present struggle for political power in South Vietnam erupted almost as soon as the Diem government was formed. The South Vietnam sects, which had not been included in the government, were first to oppose it, primarily because it seemed to jeopardize their independent existence. Somewhat later, the army leadership under General Hinh broke openly with Diem. Although an uneasy alliance came into being between the sects and General Hinh, it fell apart when Diem, under pressure to compromise, reshuffled his government to admit representatives of the important Caodai and Hoa Hao sects. However, the third of the sects, the Binh Xuyen, continued to support Hinh and to defy Diem. General Xuan, a French-naturalized Cochinchinese and former Prime Minister, is associated with the Army–Binh Xuyen faction. Other individuals in opposition to Diem and contending for power include former prime minister Buu Loc, who has some support in Paris and among elements in Bao Dai's entourage, and former prime minister Nguyen Van Tam, father of General Hinh, who appears to have the support of many French officials in Saigon. Prince Buu Hoi, cousin of Bao Dai, has influential support in France at present. He has in the past supported the Viet Minh and participated in efforts to bring about a negotiated end of the Indochina war.

19. Diem, the leading lay Catholic in Vietnam, is honest, austere, and widely respected for his integrity and nationalistic zeal. He has spent many years abroad and has not been associated with any of the previous governments in Vietnam. He has the popular backing of most Catholics and some following among the people at large, the unorganized support of most nationalist intellectuals, and the backing of the dissident Caodai General Trinh Minh The. He also has the support of other Caodai and Hoa Hao leaders, who have joined his government, but this support is not very firm. However, Diem is rigid, unwilling to compromise, and inexperienced in the rough and tumble of politics. He is acutely suspicious of his colleagues on the political scene and is inclined to seek advice among a small group of relatives and close friends who, for the most part, are incapable of proffering sound counsel.

20. None of the groups opposing Diem has any broad-based popular support. It is the weakness of Diem rather than any genuine political strength of their own that enables them to prolong the political crisis in Saigon. The Binh Xuyen has dicipline, wealth, and control of the National Police and Sureté, but it is totally corrupt and numerically weak. The army leadership personified by General Hinh is dependent upon French backing and does not have solid support from the masses of troops nor from the people; moreover, it is divided in itself. There is no widespread support for any individual contenders for power; each has numerous and strong enemies.

21. The intentions of Bao Dai, who remains in France, are difficult to assess. His first intervention in the political struggle was on the side of Hinh, the Binh Xuyen, and General Xuan, against Diem. He was thwarted mainly because of strong US representations. More recently he has intervened on the side of Diem. Bao Dai's popularity is now at its lowest ebb and his circle of supporters is reported to be narrowing daily. However, he still has political importance because of his hereditary position and because he can, as chief of state, give the cachet of legitimacy to his appointees. He is a shrewd politician, but is weak, venal, infused with a sense of his own grandeur, and wholly incapable of consistently responsible action.

22. The present key to political power in South Vietnam is held not by Vietnamese groups or combinations of groups, but by the French. Under present circumstances, only the French can provide to the legitimate governing authority in Vietnam the power it now lacks, and force the coalescence of the various factions, groups, and individuals. US support keeps Diem in office, but the fact that the French have withheld full support deprives him of the power to govern.

Military Factors

23. The Vietnamese National Army has an estimated strength of 170,000 regulars and 10,000 auxiliaries. Naval and air strength is negligible. The regulars include 5 infantry regiments and 152 combat battalions, of which 69 are infantry, 61 light infantry, 8 guard, 5 airborne infantry, 8 artillery, and one armored reconnaissance. The regroupment necessitated by the Geneva Agreements has forced many units to leave their home provinces for the first time, resulting in a considerable number of desertions since 1 June (up to 25 percent of the total army strength). Some auxiliaries and other semimilitary forces are being demobilized, with the exception of the armed forces of the South Vietnam sects and certain guard and militia elements. The Vietnamese General Staff has become so involved in political affairs that it has neglected the required planning of an adequate internal security program. This neglect has fostered a spirit of insubordination and irresponsibility throughout the army. The army in

some instances has been incapable of executing occupation and pacification operations in areas formerly under Viet Minh control. Almost all units, particularly those from North Vietnam, require a period of intensive training and reorganization to bring them up to strength and improve their effectiveness.

24. Advisory and training aid is provided by approximately 4,800 French officers and NCO's currently serving in the French Military Mission to Vietnam. This mission is to be increased to 6,000 by the end of 1954. These individuals serve in command, staff, and advisory roles on the Vietnamese General Staff, in the territorial command structure, and in training establishments. About 20 percent of Vietnamese infantry units and 50 percent of support and technical units are cadred at least partially by the French. The army is still under French operational control and continues to be completely dependent on the French for logistic support.

25. A major reason for the ineffectiveness of the Vietnamese National Army is its lack of adequately trained officers. Only about one percent have received training roughly equivalent to that of a US army officer of field grade, and virtually none has a comparable background of staff and command experience. Very few of these Vietnamese officers would be competent even in assignments justified by their training and experience, and even fewer are capable of an adequate performance at the higher positions of responsibility which they now hold. Their background is one of subordination to French command, and they are inclined to rely heavily on French advisers even when given positions of authority and responsibility.

26. The other serious deficiencies in the South Vietnamese national forces, ineffective organization and training and absence of logistics and technical services, are related to the lack of leadership and stem from the same basic cause, i.e., French failure to train and develop qualified leaders. This situation can be resolved only over a period of time and only if an intensive program for the progressive development of an effective officer corps is soon initiated.

27. Few details are available on the pattern of loyalties within the national forces. The General Staff is apparently divided. Certain elements have been pushing Hinh to overthrow the government in a coup and to establish a military dictatorship. Other officers have attempted to help mediate Hinh's difficulties with the government. Still others are reported to support Diem. However, there is no officer, except possibly General Vy, presently acting chief of staff, who could command the loyalty and confidence of a majority of the army in the event Hinh were removed against his wishes.

28. We have little information on the strength and status of other semimilitary and police forces. The sect armed forces, although woe-

fully inadequate according to generally accepted military standards, are the most important. There are a total of about 10,000 armed Caodai troops. Of these, approximately 4,000 are largely under control of General Trinh Minh The and the remainder are under Vietnam and French Army control. The Hoa Hao forces total about 8,000 of which about 5,200 are in Vietnamese or French army units, and about 2,500 led by Ba Cut, an ex-army officer, who is engaged in general dissident action against both the Vietnamese National Army and the Caodai. The Binh Xuyen have an independent force of 2,600 armed troops, in addition to the urban police forces under their control which number about 4,500. These forces are little more than local militia and are in effect private armies for these groups.

29. Scuth Vietnam's mobilizable manpower pool is estimated at 1,500,000 physically fit, military-age males, of which about 20 percent are now under arms. An additional 10 percent could probably be mobilized without initially curtailing essential economic activities. The Vietnamese government would be almost entirely dependent upon foreign aid to support such a force.

30. The Diem government proposes to expand the army to 200,000 by the end of 1954, and to 225,000 by the end of 1955. By the latter date, the army would include 10 divisions plus 60 territorial battalions. The cost of maintaining these forces through 1955 has been estimated at about $450,000,000, of which almost all would have to be provided by external assistance. The French have supported this proposal as being required to maintain a power balance vis-à-vis the Viet Minh. A proposal for development of a National Guard under the Ministry of the Interior has been postponed pending the outcome of French-Vietnamese-United States discussions.

31. On the other hand, the United States is considering the reduction of the Vietnamese army to about 80,000, including 3 combat light divisions. These reduced forces would have primarily an internal security mission. Against a large-scale Viet Minh invasion, they would serve only as a delaying force. Cost of maintaining the forces at the reduced levels has been tentatively estimated at about $200,000,000 per year. This estimated cost is in addition to financial, economic, and military support funds, which might total $150,000,000 per year.

French Armed Forces

32. The French Expeditionary Corps in Indochina is composed of approximately 150,000 regulars and 22,000 auxiliaries.* Present plans call for the further reduction of the regular component to 100,000 during 1955. The French Air Force in Indochina has 12,000 men and

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*The regulars in the French Expeditionary Corps are made up of approximately 53,000 French, 12,000 Foreign Legion, 18,000 West Africans, 33,000 North African, and 34,000 indigenous troops. [Footnote in the source text.]

approximately 600 aircraft. During 1955 it is planned to reduce the personnel strength to 6,000. The French Navy, including Naval air, has a personnel strength of 10,500. During 1955 it is planned to reduce this to approximately 9,000. At the present time the French Expeditionary Corps could not without external reinforcement defend South Vietnam against Viet Minh aggression.

Communist Capabilities and Intentions†

33. While South Vietnam has been experiencing mounting instability since Geneva, the Communists in the North have continued to grow in political and military strength. There has been no evidence of dissidence within the top leadership of the Viet Minh regime as a result of the armistice and the Geneva accords.

34. The Viet Minh is adopting a conciliatory line toward France, thus seeking to exploit French hopes of retaining their economic and cultural interests in North Vietnam. It probably hopes that French susceptibility to an arrangement with the Viet Minh will increase and consequently reduce French willingness to support a strongly nationalistic state in South Vietnam.

35. The Viet Minh is consolidating and reorganizing its armed forces by grouping formerly independent regular and regional units to form new divisions with augmented firepower. This augmented firepower results principally from a high level of Chinese Communist aid in 1954, including illegal aid since the cease-fire. Within the period of this estimate the Viet Minh will probably have at least 11 or 12 infantry divisions, two artillery divisions, and one anti-aircraft division. These developments would more than double the pre-Geneva combat effectiveness and capabilities of the Viet Minh regular army. The Viet Minh is expanding and improving its transportation and communication facilities, including rail and highway links with South China.

36. During the current transition period, Communist tactics in the south are being shifted from the "armed struggle" to the "political struggle" stage. The main facets of Communist policy appear to be ostensible compliance with the Geneva armistice provisions and continued development of Communist subversive capabilities in the south. Although substantial Viet Minh forces are being evacuated from South Vietnam, we believe that large numbers of trained military and political personnel remain. Furthermore, refugee groups evacuated from North Vietnam were probably infiltrated by Communists who will almost certainly seek to exploit grievances induced by the harsh conditions of resettlement.

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†The general topic of Communist courses of action in Asia through 1957 is covered in NIE 10–7–54. [Footnote in the source text. For an extract of NIE 10–7–54, Nov. 23, 1954, see volume XIV.]

37. It is likely that Communist elements are playing an important role behind the scenes in the present political crises in South Vietnam, seeking to bring to power elements that would be amenable first to the resumption of North-South relations and later to the formation of a coalition regime. Furthermore, certain pro-Communist groups are making their appearance in Saigon, the most prominent of which is the "South Vietnam Movement for the Defense of Peace."

French Capabilities and Intentions

38. Since Geneva, French actions in Vietnam have been confused and contradictory and have encouraged the present paralysis. Officially at least, the present general lines of French policy are expressed in the French-US understanding reached September 29. This understanding was reaffirmed and clarified in the recent Washington talks between the French Premier and the US Secretary of State. The French agreed to support the independence of the three Associated States and, within the framework imposed by the Geneva accords, to oppose the extension of Viet Minh influence and control. France further pledged to coordinate with the US in the planning and implementation of economic and military aid programs to strengthen the independence of these states. Finally, the French agreed to support Diem in the establishment of a strong, anti-Communist regime in Vietnam. Despite this agreement, the French have not given wholehearted support to Diem.

39. The French appear to have three principal objectives with respect to Indochina:

a. To maintain to the maximum degree feasible the French position in Indochina;
b. To avoid involvement in hostilities and the financial burden of maintaining substantial forces in Indochina; and
c. To avoid jeopardizing US–French relations. The fact that these three objectives contain elements of mutual inconsistency poses real problems to French policy.

40. In pursuit of these objectives two general lines of approach are open to the French. They can decide to support the reunification of Vietnam through elections held pursuant to the Geneva accords. The French interest in promoting the international *détente* in the Far East which they believe was inaugurated at Geneva would tend to lead to this decision, and this tendency would be strengthened if France became convinced that a Communist takeover was inevitable. The French might also believe that their desire to maintain a preferred position in Indochina would be better served by an accommodation with the Viet Minh than under a strongly anti-French South Vietnamese government. If they adopted this approach, the French would permit events to drift to a Communist victory or would support the estab-

lishment in South Vietnam of a government that would acquiesce to or facilitate the formation of a Communist-led coalition of all Vietnam. Such a course would permit the French to achieve their objective of avoiding the resumption of hostilities and reducing their military commitment in Vietnam. However, the French would hesitate to adopt this policy if they believed that it would severely strain their relations with the US. Their final decision would be greatly influenced by whether or not they were confident of UK support.

41. On the other hand, France may decide that its relationship with the US is the determining factor, and that to preserve this relationship it is essential to support an anti-Communist South Vietnam, postponing elections if necessary. The French would feel, however, that such a course would involve a substantially increased risk of renewed hostilities with the Viet Minh. Moreover, the French probably estimate that, in a strongly nationalistic South Vietnam, France could not retain more than the vestiges of its position.

42. Present French actions in Indochina indicate that the French have not fully made up their mind which course to follow. On the one hand, the French government continues to support, though without enthusiasm, the attempt to strengthen the Diem government. On the other hand, the French appear to be considering possible substitutes for Diem who, at least in the past, have had pro-Viet Minh sympathies and who might facilitate a reunification of Vietnam. Moreover, through the appointment and activities of Jean Sainteny, the French representative in North Vietnam, the French have clearly indicated their intention of maintaining political contacts with the Viet Minh, preserving, insofar as possible, their economic and cultural interests in the area, and of continuing trade relations with North Vietnam.

III. *Future Prospects in South Vietnam*

43. French policy will be a major factor determining developments in South Vietnam during the period of this estimate. We believe that the French estimate that South Vietnam cannot be held over the long term, except at very high cost. We further believe that the French would be unwilling to postpone the elections unless the UK agreed and unless the US was willing to shoulder the major military burden in Indochina, including a commitment to employ US forces if required.

44. The political situation in South Vietnam has steadily deteriorated since the conclusion of the armistice. Prime Minister Diem will probably remain in office only so long as the US continues to give him strong backing. If Diem had the full support of the French, he might be able gradually to create a sense of national will and purpose in South Vietnam; in this respect, he is probably unique among Vietnamese leaders in that his strong nationalist record might enable him to use such support without being subject to the onus of collaboration

with the French. However, the French are not likely to provide Diem with full and positive support. Therefore, Diem will probably not be able to reestablish the authority of the government throughout South Vietnam and to tackle effectively the multitude of pressing problems now facing the country.

45. Should the Diem government fall, it would probably be succeeded by an uneasy coalition drawn from the self-interested individuals and groups now contesting Diem's position. Almost certainly, however, any successor to the Diem government would be hampered by the incessant political intrigues which have plagued Diem. Moreover, no successor government is likely to be effective. A government tied closely to and politically supported by the French can have little popular following. But a government which does not have the benefit of the maintenance of public order by the French coupled with French non-interference in the local political scene, is not likely to be able to maintain itself for any length of time.

46. The internal security situation will remain precarious. The French will continue reluctant to commit their forces in internal security operations, believing that such action would antagonize the population and in the end might create greater problems than it would solve. Moreover, during the period of this estimate, Vietnamese forces will lack the capacity to maintain order unless the present political deterioration is reversed.

47. At the present time, the combined forces of the French Expeditionary Forces and the Vietnamese National Army could only delay a full scale invasion of Viet Minh forces; they could not stop it without reinforcements from outside. The over-all Franco-Vietnamese capability in this regard will be diminished in the next year as the French forces are reduced.

48. We believe that the Viet Minh will continue to gain in political strength and prestige and, with Chinese aid, to increase its military striking power in North Vietnam. The Viet Minh probably now feels that it can achieve control over all Vietnam without initiating large-scale warfare. Accordingly, we believe that the Communists will exert every effort to accomplish their objectives through means short of war. Viet Minh agents will continue to subvert all susceptible elements of the population, to intrigue to prevent the coalescence of the various factions and the building of any strength in the south, and Viet Minh "shadow-governments" and politico-military networks will be established wherever the failure of the national government or the French to impose controls leaves the Communists a vacuum in which to operate. As a result of their activities and probable degree of penetration in South Vietnam, it is possible that the Communists will succeed in convincing most Vietnamese in the south of the inevitability of Communist control.

49. If, on the other hand, South Vietnam should appear to be gaining in strength or if elections were postponed over Communist objections, the Communists probably would step up their subversive and guerrilla activities in the South and if necessary would infiltrate additional armed forces in an effort to gain control over the area. However, we believe that they would be unlikely openly to invade South Vietnam at least prior to July 1956, the date set for national elections, because: (*a*) they would consider that their prospects of gaining control over the area without resort to invasion continued to be highly favorable; (*b*) they would be concerned over the possibility of US military counteraction; and (*c*) they would probably fear that invasion would induce the neutral nations in Asia to move toward open alignments with the West.

50. We believe, on the basis of present trends, it is highly unlikely that South Vietnam will develop the strength necessary to counter growing Communist subversion within its borders; it almost certainly would not be able to defeat the Communists in country-wide elections. Even before the elections scheduled for 1956, the probable growth of Communist influence in the South may result in strong pressures within South Vietnam for coalition with the North.

Laos

I. *Present Situation*

51. Laos is principally threatened at present by the Communist-dominated Pathet Lao movement, which occupies and controls the two northern provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua. The Pathet Lao is headed by Prince Souphanouvong, a member of the Laotian royal family. The Pathet Lao Army numbers about 6,000 men, and at present is still supported by Viet Minh "volunteer" forces, which probably had not been entirely evacuated from Laos by the agreed date of November 19, 1954.

52. Laos is also threatened by an allegedly non-Communist "Free Laotian" movement of unknown dimensions which is probably led by Prince Phetsarath, a pretender to the Laotian throne, who is now an exile in Thailand. This group probably was responsible for both an abortive Laotian Army cadet mutiny in June 1954 and the assassination of the Laotian Defense Minister in September. Thai-Laotian relations have been strained because the Laotians claim that the Thai police are supporting Prince Phetsarath as a means of increasing Thai influence in Laos.

53. Laos lacks effective political leadership and the population is in large measure politically apathetic. There are strong personal cleavages among the small group of politically experienced national leaders. Nevertheless, Laos probably will continue to be led by a reasonably

stable coalition of leading non-Communist political personalities with the strongly anti-Communist and pro-US Crown Prince Savang maintaining a balance of power. The previous policies of anti-Communism and requests for US and French assistance will probably be continued.

54. The Laotian armed forces, organized only to battalion level, have a current strength of 27,000 and are augmented by a French Military Mission of 1,500 officers and NCO's, and by 3,500 French combat troops. The army lacks qualified field-grade officers and relies on the French army for senior command and staff personnel and for actual direction of army administration. Laos is incapable of financing its present forces, and the Laotian army will continue to be dependent on outside financing, training, equipping, and advisory assistance for a considerable time to come. The Laotian army has not displayed a real will to fight in past operations, and is incapable of defending Laos against any Viet Minh invasion. It is unlikely that the Laotian army can exercise effective control in the two northern provinces in which the Pathet Lao are to be concentrated under the Geneva agreement or that it can prevent Communist activities on the local level elsewhere in Laos.

II. *Future Prospects*

55. During the period of this estimate, developments affecting the strength and stability of Laos will be determined primarily by external factors, such as Viet Minh and Chinese Communist intentions regarding Laos, the extent and nature of US and French military assistance to the Kingdom, and most importantly, developments in Vietnam.

56. Whatever the outcome of French-Laotian efforts to demobilize the Pathet Lao troops, Pathet Lao followers of the Viet Minh will probably continue to exercise considerable control in the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua. Moreover, the Communists will have the capability by political and subversive means to heighten their influence in Laos and to weaken the anti-Communist government. However, the nature of Communist aggressive action against Laos will be moderated by the Communist desire to continue their "peaceful coexistence" line in Asia, particularly directed toward Indian reactions, and to a lesser degree by the possibility of US counteraction. Under these conditions, and providing that the Lao Government obtains and effectively utilizes outside assistance, we believe that it can limit Communist political advances.

57. However, if during the period of this estimate, South Vietnam should fall to the Viet Minh, Communist capabilities for pressure against Laos would be substantially increased, and Laotian will and capability to resist these pressures would be correspondingly lessened. The extent to which the Communists choose to exploit this situation

would depend almost entirely on their estimate of the probable reactions of the Manila Pact powers and of the neutral countries of South and Southeast Asia.

Cambodia

I. *Current Situation*

58. King Norodom has kept power in his hands since 1952 when the national assembly ceased to function. The Cambodian public generally has credited the King with success in the achievement of full independence for the kingdom. Son Ngoc Thanh, the last and most important of the non-Communist dissident leaders, rallied to the King in September 1954. However, he retains considerable following and the firmness of his loyalty to the King is questionable.

59. The Cambodian armed forces, organized only to battalion level, total 32,000, including 4,000 National Guard and 8,000 auxiliaries. The army would be incapable of defending against a large scale Viet Minh invasion. There is a definite lack of qualified field-grade officers, and the quality of the army has decreased since the withdrawal of French cadres in 1953. Moreover, at the present time the effectiveness of the army is deteriorating because of an incompetent defense minister whom the King so far has failed to replace. The army continues dependent on French advisers for its administration. The greater portion of the Cambodian defense budget must be supplied by external aid.

60. The Cambodian economy is relatively stable, and the country produces a food surplus. Cambodia has a favorable balance of trade but its heavy dependence on exports of rubber and low-quality rice, makes the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in world demand for these commodities. The Cambodian government is greatly interested in accelerating economic development and will probably request extensive foreign economic assistance.

61. Cambodia is concerned that its main trade route, the Mekong River, and the port facilities at Saigon are both under control of South Vietnam. Pending conclusion of curent negotiations with South Vietnam, the latter is withholding the Cambodian share of customs duties collected at Saigon. As a result the Cambodian financial position remains highly precarious.

62. Although France has recognized Cambodia's full independence and sovereignty, Cambodia's relations with France and its role in the French Union have not been redefined. Cambodia seems intent on broadening its international ties and appears unwilling to rely primarily on French aid and advice. Since July 1954 no French or French Union troops have been stationed in Cambodia except the small French Military Mission.

63. Although 2,800 Vietnamese Communist troops and their dependents have been evacuated from Cambodia, we believe that a sizable

Viet Minh cadre has been left behind. Moreover, the Cambodian Communist armed bands, although ending their guerrilla activities, have failed to demobilize or to turn over their arms.

II. *Future Prospects*

64. The future political stability of the kingdom will depend largely on the attitude of the King, who is at the present time the only important political leader. There are some reports that the King has been exploring the possibility of a "middle course" by which Cambodia would receive the benefits of western economic aid while simultaneously maintaining the "good will" of the Communist Bloc. However, we believe that for the next year or so, providing outside assistance and the assurance of western support are forthcoming, the King's leadership will not be successfully challenged and the Cambodians will maintain an anti-Communist policy and will be able to control internal subversion. Cambodia does not have and cannot develop the capability to resist a large-scale invasion.

65. Future events in Cambodia will be considerably affected by developments in Vietnam and in Laos. A Communist takeover in South Vietnam would increase Communist capabilities against Cambodia and would impair Cambodian will to resist further Communist pressures, though we estimate that the Cambodians would be more resolute than would the Laotians under similar circumstances.

[Here follows a map of Indochina, which is not reproduced here.]

120.251G/11–2454 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET NIACT SAIGON, November 24, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 8 : 25 a. m.]

1967. Repeated information Paris 639. Department pass Defense. From Collins. Reference Embtel 1830.[1]

1. Upon return of Dr. Quat from Paris two days ago, Diem had offered him Defense Ministry and urged that he retain present deputy, Minh, as I had recommended to Diem. Through Colonel Lansdale I was informed yesterday that Quat was considering accepting post but was reluctant to retain Minh. I had Quat to lunch today. I outlined to him my concept of structure and role of Vietnam Armed Forces and broad lines of programs contained in reference telegram. I urged him to accept post of Defense Minister and to retain Minh as deputy, in order that Minh could help tide over initial potential period of resentment from General Hinh's adherents. Quat indicated general agree-

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[1] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

ment with concepts I outlined, said he was giving serious consideration to offer, and that Minh was not a serious obstacle, but that he would consult with his friends and talk again to Diem before making decision. He said he would see me again toward end of this week.

2. As indicated in paragraph 1, Embtel 1935,[2] I am daily expecting Ely's specific views regarding changes in minute of understanding on development and training of autonomous Vietnam Armed Forces, and his concept of program for integration US advisers into Vietnamese Army.

3. By end of week I hope agreement will be reached for designation of Quat as Defense Minister and that Ely's specific comments will have been received. It is highly desirable that we move ahead with implementation of crash program for reorganization of armed forces including transfer of troops to areas where they can carry out pacification activities.

4. While I realize programs recommended in reference telegram require careful study and analysis in Washington, it would be most helpful if I could be given guidance with respect to the order of magnitude of program that will be supported here in order that I can keep up momentum of action with French and Vietnamese. I therefore urge that prompt action be taken on programs recommended in reference telegram.

KIDDER

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[2] Dated Nov. 23, p. 2279.

751G.00/11–2454 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET

PARIS, November 24, 1954—2 p. m.
[Received 9:54 a. m.]

2203. Repeated information Saigon 314. We talked to Amb at Large Luyen [1] and Vo Lang last eve.

1) We asked about Hinh's call on Bao Dai and referred Hinh's arrival statement as well his interview AFP to effect he, Hinh, planning return Vietnam near future. Luyen said he had discussed this matter with Bao Dai several times since his, Luyen's, arrival Paris last Friday,[2] and that he, Luyen, of opinion we need not worry about Hinh's returning in immediate future or that Hinh would pose serious threat hereafter Diem govt. Luyen underlined Bao Dai intends take firm position this score.

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[1] Ngo Dinh Luyen, brother of Ngo Dinh Diem.
[2] Nov. 19.

2) Re Hinh, Luyen showed us photostats of documents which he had brought back for Bao Dai. Luyen indicated Emb Saigon aware these photostats and he emphasized necessity secrecy regarding their existence. . . . According Luyen, these should help settle the Hinh problem. We read photostats which concerned *coup d'état* details and timetable, as well as projected Cabinet and supreme revolutionary committee membership. As perhaps Dept already aware, documents contain statement to effect common front to be made with Commies this regard. Membership proposed cabinet includes several Vietnamese with presumed Vietminh affiliations . . . . Of interest, cabinet to be headed by Buu Hoi, Tam and Xuan Vice Presidents, Hinh Defense Min, and Bai Vien Interior Min. This connection, we were told Buu Hoi maintaining close contact currently with Tran Van Huu who still Paris and that Bao Dai approved of Buu Loc ouster since he believes Buu Loc has actively supported Buu Hoi campaign.

3) We asked about Frederic-Dupont's and Letourneau's call Nov. 22 on Bao Dai and we were told that they had tried to persuade Bao Dai to return Vietnam, oust Diem, and take over reins government himself, but that Bao Dai had rejected proposal categorically. Luyen said Bao Dai satisfied we (U.S.) taking firm stand South Vietnam and that he, Bao Dai, prepared support Diem actively and resist countervailing pressures. We were shown this connection series petitions purportedly issued by local Vietnamese organizations calling on Bao Dai intervene and provide solution Vietnamese problem. We were told these paper organizations being formed currently under inspiration Hinh relative as means designed bring pressure on Bao Dai but that latter not taking them seriously.

4) Luyen underlined importance he attached Gen. Collins' recent statement and said he hoped French press accounts tending imply Collins speaking for himself only and not U.S. Government completely unfounded. We said as far we knew what Collins had to say reflected general line our thinking this subject.

DILLON

751G.00/11-2454 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 24, 1954—8:01 p. m.

2112. Following is summary political and economic points raised during Mendes-France talks re Vietnam:

1. *Support of Diem Government*

A. Secretary stated government formed around Diem is as good as is possible, perhaps better. While realizing Diem's weaknesses he has strong spirit of nationalism, is anti-Communist, dedicated, sincere and honest and actually head of government. US prepared put strong support behind Diem if French are also prepared. No use our two governments working opposite directions. If French support someone else, no chance of success in Free Vietnam and better not support anyone.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Repeated for information to Paris as 1937; pouched to Phnom Penh and Vientiane.

B. Mendes stated French had agreed September talks support Diem although they not optimistic about his abilities. French had pressed Bao Dai to call back Hinh. This evidence French doing their best. French believe within few months they and US will be forced consider replacement Diem. They had no one to propose at this time but wished point out some Vietnamese who worked with French in past had much better records than Diem. Some present governors quite efficient. Although Tam too close to French had done well. Believe time had come for France and US to give Diem some specific advice, particularly regarding agrarian reform, to establish efficient administration and give attention to rural areas. Mendes understood Diem had lots US money for propaganda, but does not use it efficiently. Propaganda must be made by Vietnamese not US or French. Diem should be given only a certain amount of time work out such a program since time short. US and France might consult in one or two months to see what form concrete action Diem has taken. Mendes asked if US were prepared go ahead on above basis of joint instructions from France and US to Diem, and if messages should be sent Collins and Ely work out precise measures. Important that they make survey of needs and keep in contact to judge results of execution.

C. Secretary replied that although no objection believed experts should get together and define specific proposals to be made and question timing and manner presentation. Also should study arrangement for speaking together regarding how proposed programs were developing. US wished first check with its field representatives about specific programs. While US agreeable working together on this matter, Secretary did not wish adopt general principle of always making joint rather than unilateral approaches in every case. While efforts and timing should be concerted, US did not wish to be committed never to consult alone with Diem government.

D. Department's comment—General Collins and country team comments requested soon as possible submit recommendations as to possible proposals to Diem on (1) improving administration, (2) various reforms and other measures, and (3) timing of execution and subsequent joint judging of results.

2. *Bao Dai*

A. Mendes said difficult for French come to decision and wished US views. Bao Dai wishes return Vietnam and French successful in preventing up to now but he is insisting. Even if Bao Dai not very interesting person he does provide legitimacy. Although now supporting Diem his future policy unknown. French afraid Bao Dai will make public statement France keeping him from returning.

B. Secretary replied while not in position advise, US opposed Bao Dai's returning.

3. *Relations with Viet Minh*

A. Secretary referred to problem of recognition which US wished avoid. Mendes described Sainteny's situation as "ambiguous". Read proposed letter to Viet Minh giving Sainteny's terms of reference charging him with defense French interests and naming him French delegate "auprès de vous". Secretary suggested substitute for this last phrase might be found which would not imply recognition. Mendes-France admitted he was not happy with this letter, would try to find better wording, but pointed out at Geneva letter was addressed by French to "Democratic Republic of Vietnam". Mendes-France feared Viet Minh would ask for reciprocal treatment Paris which would be difficult refuse. Sainteny mission important for France even though few French remaining north. Will be real problem when Haiphong evacuated. He inquired re possible US discrimination against French citizens in north. Secretary said still under study.

Secretary said appeared be belief in some quarters compromise between north and south Vietnam inevitable. US willing listen arguments along this line but not disposed agree such approach which we feel inevitably result in loss of area to Communists. If Viet Minh get majority national government, minority would not long survive. Object is therefore build strong anti-Communist government South Vietnam not one seeking accommodation with Viet Minh.

B. Mendes-France views—Mendes said felt same way as Secretary that cooperation between North and South Vietnam would be very bad. Communists at Geneva proposed tricks re bipartite relationship but French had fought against such. Only thing to do is develop political strength South Vietnam as counter to north. Even if south is not as strong as north if there is real political life something could be hoped for. As long as disorder exists in south there will be infiltration and no counter to north.[2]

4. *Economic and Financial*

Mendes-France asked that financial questions not be included in political discussions. It was agreed refer them to experts meeting in Washington near future. Economic aid programs also not raised. Secretary said frankly US faces problem of what is worthwhile spend in money and effort in view of possible outcome Vietnam. Similar amount money spent elsewhere might accomplish better results.

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[2] Telegram 2113 to Saigon (1938 to Paris), Nov. 24, concerning a closely related question, read as follows: "During Mendes visit Secretary raised matter privately of elections in Viet-Nam.

"Mendes said too early speak with finality this time and much would depend on conditions at time. Present view was that elections should be held by small local units rather than on single national ticket. In this way some anti-Communist local leaders would be elected rather than clear Communist victory through national selection." (751G.00/11-2454)

DULLES

611.51/11–2654 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 26, 1954—11 : 45 a. m.
PRIORITY

2126. Following is summary military points regarding Viet-Nam raised during Mendes-France talks:

1. *Collins Proposed Agreement on Training.*[2]

Regarding press reports on General Collins' press statements, Mendes apprehensive might bring protest by Communists. In private and plenary talks he repeatedly emphasized important no pretext be given them to charge breach armistice. Appeared from Collins' project, French responsibilities to be decreased and finally disappear with U.S. taking over. He had to explain to French people why they should still support heavy burden in Indochina if they get impression no utility in such may be strong reaction. Hoped full consultations future. Regarding item one of Collins' proposed memorandum, this should be studied by experts. Item two; French had no objections but doubted could be carried out by July. Mendes objected particularly paragraph three and to remaining items. U.S. responsibility for all military assistance likely to raise very important objections. If main body instructors French, hard to see why political responsibility in U.S. hands. Also doubted if this consistent with Geneva agreement which prohibits additional foreign but not French troops. Would also have serious effect on morale FEC.

Secretary replied unaware Collins statement until mentioned by Mendes. Agreed should be prior consultations if possible. U.S. realized Communist sensitivity regarding U.S. actions compared with lesser concern over similar acts taken by French. But one should not necessarily refrain from taking action which Communists might possibly claim be inconsistent with Armistice since virtually any act could be so claimed due ability take extreme interpretation. However, Secretary emphasized U.S. does not desire do anything provocative. Without current French presence Indochina there would be vacuum which enemy would quickly fill. Secretary said regarding proposed memorandum that U.S. did not wish to press for any formula if French found it seriously objectionable. Basic question is, who is to be responsible for training. U.S. willing take on training job if that is to be U.S. responsibility, but does not want responsibilities it cannot discharge. Must be decision on whether use American or French methods and basic theories. This does not mean French personnel eliminated. U.S. hoped questions of national prestige not be allowed compromise issue. Secretary proposed matter be referred to Collins and Ely.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated for information priority to Paris as 1942; pouched to Phnom Penh and Vientiane.

[2] See telegram 1854 from Saigon, Nov. 16, p. 2259.

Mendes undecided and specifically endorsed referral training question back to Ely and Collins, although had serious reservations about memorandum. He said Ely's cable has not agreed paragraphs three and four. He hoped Collins would not make any further public statements on this matter before agreement reached.

2. *French Expeditionary Corps.*

Mendes said U.S. informed French would reduce FEC to one hundred thousand by end 1955. Necessary have that strength in Indochina. Not prepared discuss U.S. financial aid for FEC now but would leave for experts Embassy Washington to work out. M. Faure understood in September talks U.S. would announce decision by December 1. Hoped support could be continued in future as in past even though previously in support combat which now ended. Political need maintain security still existed.

Secretary said must take into account likely cost of supporting FEC, national army and economic and technical aid in Indochina. If total is large sum, might not be worthwhile doing. Any commitment would be subject total review of U.S. programs in Far East.

3. *Viet-Nam National Army.*

A. Mendes-France summarized cable from Ely to effect Collins proposal for training would result in eviction French influence, and Collins project for sending hundreds of Vietnamese officers to U.S. would weaken French cultural influence, while eventual replacement of French cadres by U.S. endangered morale of FEC as well as give Viet Minh provocation. Secretary replied primary purpose was to build strong national force in Free Viet-Nam, and not to establish U.S. influence in the new area or to bolster French influence in an old area. Unless priority given to Viet-Nam build-up there would be no U.S. or French influence there a year from now. He especially urged Mendes-France everything possible be done not allow considerations national prestige compromise achievement objective. Mendes-France said he was in full agreement and therefore wished people on spot make decisions.

B. On size Vietnamese forces, Secretary expressed U.S. theory was to have adequate local forces to maintain order against subversion and serve as small blocking force against attack from outside with reliance for principal deterrent on obligations under Manila Pact. Together with centralized mobile reserve, this concept seemed only practical one to U.S. and was basic strategy in Collins' recommendations. If there were open attack from outside, the area was subject to protection from outside under Manila Pact. Secretary thought U.S. prepared throw some forces into such situation. This fact would serve deter attack of that kind. U.S. does not feel it possible to build up local forces strong enough to throw back invasion. Burden of support would be prohibitive. U.S. proposes reduction in force of national army to eighty-three thousand men within six months. Cost about two hundred million a year.

C. Mendes said he understood general principles which appeared sensible, and should be studied by military experts on spot and left up to Ely and Collins. Mendes during discussions did show misunderstanding of U.S. intentions regarding national army. Thought U.S. wished build up separately force for internal security. Apparently had two things confused. He said he understood U.S. wanted set up separate army supporting government. This was delicate matter which could weaken regular army. Secretary and Hensel stated there were not to be two forces, but only one as outlined in Collins' recommendations. If FEC only 100,000 and national army reduced to only 90,000, Mendes did not see what latter could accomplish except perhaps internal order while Viet Minh forces being increased.

4. *Violations of Armistice.*

See Department telegram 2071 to Saigon.[3]

5. *Helicopters.*

Mendes took this up both in private talk with Secretary and in plenary. He stated requirement for six additional helicopters for use of ICC particularly in Laos whose importance he emphasized. France had already turned over all they could spare to ICC. He also stated need spares for grounded planes and hoped for satisfactory reply soon.

U.S. representatives replied no appropriated funds for purpose of aiding ICC. However a memorandum was requested of the French to include what was provided and what capabilities French already have to provide needed planes themselves. As for spare parts, U.S. had no information planes grounded that account. U.S. would have to take into account balance between use of planes and availability of spares.

Saltzman

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[3] Telegram 2071 to Saigon (281 to New York), Nov. 22, summarizing the Dulles–Mendès-France talks as they related to the refugee problem and particularly to Viet Minh restrictions upon those in the north who might wish to emigrate, is not printed. (251G.51G22/11–2254)

751G.5 MSP/11-2654: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, November 26, 1954—3:50 p. m.
PRIORITY

2130. For Collins. Re Washington consideration total cost effectiveness US programs Vietnam, you will have noted Secretary reserved US position with Mendes-France. In light of these talks and your findings, State, Defense and FOA would appreciate having during process your mission basic estimate from you prospects of success for US programs designed strengthen Diem government, create some security and stability and hold Free Vietnam. Since total cost FY 55 and FY 56 programs will be in magnitude $400 million more or less, US Government would like your views before final commitments made. Desirability of basic estimate has been raised in OCB and discussed at high levels of interested agencies.

Suggest you develop such estimate as soon as you feel you have had sufficient time and facilities to canvass general situation Vietnam.[2]

In order obtain over-all picture of prospects three Associated States, suggest it might be useful for Yost, McClintock and you meet together in near future for consolidated appraisal of three states and your combined recommendations.

SALTZMAN

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated for information to Phnom Penh as 167 and Vientiane as 115.

[2] In telegram 2063 from Saigon, Dec. 3, General Collins stated the opinion that $400 million was the practical minimum estimate for FY 1955 and FY 1956. The General contended that any lesser figure would be insufficient to accomplish the objectives of the United States in Vietnam. (751G.5 MSP/12-354)

751G.5/11-2654

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Hensel) to the Secretary of State[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, November 26, 1954.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I refer to your request of 16 November 1954[2] that the Department of Defense consider its position with respect to Vietnamese force levels in the light of recommendations on this subject made by the U.S. Ambassador (Department of State telegram from Saigon, number 1830, 15 November 1954).

With reference to General Collins' proposal on the levels of indigenous forces that should be developed in Free Viet-Nam, Cambodia, and Laos, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended, on the basis of the type missions to be performed to maintain internal security in Indochina, minimum personnel strengths as follows:

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[1] The text of this letter was transmitted to Saigon in telegram 2210, Dec. 1 (also sent to Paris by pouch).

[2] Not printed.

a. Viet-Nam: 89,085 which includes 4,400 civilians at an estimated cost of $193.1 million for FY 1956. Cost of U.S. support during the remainder of FY 1955 has not been computed but will probably be approximately $140 million.

b. Cambodia: 28,815 at an estimated cost of $30.9 million for FY 1955 and $69.7 million for FY 1956.

c. Laos: Since direct U.S. military aid to Laos is specifically restricted by the terms of the Geneva Armistice Agreement, no force levels are recommended for this country. However, Laos is capable of furnishing 12–15,000 personnel for its armed forces.

Fund estimates do not include approximately 154 million dollar maintenance and military support programs for the build-up of Associated States forces.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that a program designed for the accomplishment of the proposed missions and for the stabilization of the Diem Government could be accomplished in the following phases:

Phase #1

a. Prompt institution of a phased reduction of current armed forces by a process of selective discharge.

b. The immediate reassignment and reorganization, with limited training, of selected personnel and units from the present forces into an internal security force capable of:

(1) Maintaining the security of the legal government in Saigon and other major population centers.

(2) Executing regional security operations in each province.

c. The deployment of selected Vietnamese Army units on territorial pacification missions.

Phase #2

The construction and operation of military center(s) for the reorganization and training of Army, Navy, and Air Force leaders and units.

Phase #3

A concerted effort in support of planned integrated operations by the armed forces to insure the elimination of Viet Minh influence and control throughout Viet-Nam.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff further consider that the chaotic internal political situation within Viet-Nam will hamper the development of loyal and effective security forces for the support of the Diem Government and that it is probable that the development of such forces will not result in political and military stability within South Viet-Nam. Unless the Vietnamese themselves show an inclination to make the individual and collective sacrifices required to resist communism no amount of external pressure and assistance can long delay a complete Communist victory in South Viet-Nam.

In a further expression of their views, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have pointed out that the recommended forces will not provide adequate security for the Associated States against external aggression after the withdrawal of the French forces. With the Viet Minh increasing the size and effectiveness of their forces, and with no forces in being committed to mutual defense under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the above long-range program would provide no more than limited initial resistance to an organized military assault by the Viet Minh.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not consider whether an increase in the number of U.S. military personnel assigned to the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), Saigon, above a total of 342, would be in violation of the Geneva Agreement. It is their view that this question properly is one to be considered by the Department of State. However, it is probable that the current MAAG Indochina is capable of furnishing training assistance to develop Army and Navy internal security forces provided:

a. A maximum portion of the MAAG military personnel is devoted to training; and
b. The cooperation and collaboration of the French MAAG is secured.

The Department of Defense concurs in the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff outlined above contingent upon:

a. Additional funds in the amount of approximately 325 million dollars being made available from Section 121 funds for the balance of FY 1955; and
b. An expression by General Collins of the validity of considering that Free Viet-Nam and the other Associated States may be saved from Communist domination and that they can establish strong, viable, indigenous governments through the above proposed and subsequent U.S. assistance programs.

Sincerely yours, H. STRUVE HENSEL

751G.5 MSP/11–2754: Telegram

The Ambassador in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET PHNOM PENH, November 27, 1954—4 p. m.

304. Repeated information Saigon 314, pouched Paris, Bangkok, Vientiane unnumbered. We have heard that JCS have decided dras-

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

tically cut total US financial support for military forces three Indochina states, apparently largely in Vietnam. Although without confirmation authenticity this report, I should like to suggest that total aid be apportioned so as to permit modest increase Cambodian armed forces next year.

Cambodian 1954 budget provided $40 million (1.4 billion piasters) for armed forces which permitted army of some 33,000 men, by US standards poorly and diversely equipped, badly trained, and incoherently organized, but nevertheless an army imbued with fighting spirit which repulsed Viet Minh invasion. For 55,000 man army they told Geneva conference was minimum for "effective defense" this country, Cambodia now budgeting preliminarily $108 million (3.8 billion piasters) for calendar 1955. Cambodian budget figure for their own contribution to both 1954 and 1955 budgets is 535 million piasters ($15 million) annually which for 1955 would mean a US or French contribution of $93 million, if it were decided their 1955 military program were sound.

While there may be excellent reasons for decreasing our overall expenditures in Indochina, I feel strongly we should help Cambodians achieve 55,000 man goal, which was figure tabled before military committee Geneva conference and thus not likely to be challenged by ICC.

Vietnamese problems are different from those of Cambodia. It cannot be too often repeated that term "Indochina" is now a romantic fiction, although it formerly served French as convenient expression for Asian colonial holdings. Cambodia differs from Vietnam ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and spiritually and an age-old antipathy separates the two. To consider Cambodian problem as part of Vietnamese problem under rubric "Indochina" would in our opinion lead to possible serious errors in future US evaluation this area. In fact, Department might concur that future telegrams re "Indochina" refer explicitly to Vietnam, or Cambodia, or Laos.

This nation has potential and will to defend its own territory within framework of any Southeast Asian defense structure and is a small but useful asset. For a relatively small expenditure here we can help to anchor Thailand's southeastern flank and plug Communist osmosis into southern Laos. In terms of military posture, geographic situation, racial and cultural ties we must consider Cambodia in same frame of reference as Thailand. In view of sums we are expending in latter country to build effective defense force and unified shield against subversion, it would seem common sense take similar precautions in this country which fits geographically into south Thailand like a baseball in a catcher's glove. If, after Dien Bien Phu and Geneva, there is in Southeast Asia a viable psychological defense line south of Chinese border it is now Mekong River west of which are Thailand and greater part of Cambodia, and to east the mountainous spine of Laos. In fact, we may in future find that political watershed between Chinese and Indian influence will be that of Mekong.

With a port on Gulf of Siam, which FOA/W has approved in principle (Usfoto 4)[2] and visiting Congressmen Vorys and Richards seem to favor (Embtel 291)[3] Cambodia can be economically independent of South Vietnam. As suggested in Embtel 221,[4] Cambodia's logical ties and ones which must be primarily considered by a successful US policy are with Buddhist countries of South and Southeast Asia. We now suggest this compatibility also makes practical geopolitical sense, and can be exploited with a minimum of expenditure and effort as adjunct to substantial American program already being forwarded in adjacent Thailand.

In consequence, I recommend that as a preliminary figure $80 million be made available in calendar year 1955 for economic support of Cambodian armed forces. This figure does not cover MDAP assistance which presumably could be made available from extensive stocks now in Vietnam which apparently will not be required in their entirety by Vietnamese armed forces.

Despite fact Cambodian Government has budgeted only $15 million for next calendar year on defense account, we are hopeful that government can be prevailed upon to double this contribution in view of anticipated refund of receipts from Vietnamese customs debt settlement. This would more than take care of deficit between overall figure of $108 million for ARK in calendar year 1955 to which we now recommend that US contribute $80 million, subject to MAAG scrutiny as outlined below.

Embassy despatch 68 of August 28, 1954[2] provided a detailed breakdown of 55,000 man army contemplated by Cambodian Government for 1955. We have been promised detailed financial breakdown of this total in near future, and will promptly submit our analysis of this when it is received. However, we are severely hampered in our technical evaluation by our lack of military staff here. Sole Army Attaché cannot physically handle this very large task. We need prompt establishment of a MAAG if we are to discharge our responsibilities in undertaking financial support of armed forces. It should be set up here, at least skeletally, before January 1, 1955 deadline for commencement of direct US aid.

Under present JCS directive a MAAG is not to be established here unless Cambodians agree to phasing out French instructors. Such agreement has not yet been reached largely because Prime Minister, who is only man in government capable of reaching a decision by himself, is desperately ill and Minister of Defense has no real capacity to reach a decision on this important policy issue. We are accordingly hampered by local circumstances from negotiating this JCS directive, although I feel confident that once we can reach responsible ministers who in turn can present issue to King, assurances conforming to JCS desires can be expected from Cambodian Government.

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[2] Not printed.
[3] Telegram 291 from Phnom Penh, Nov. 24, is not printed. (951H.541/11-2454)
[4] Telegram 221 from Phnom Penh, Nov. 3, is not printed. (790.5/11-354)

This does not, however, answer immediate and pressing problem which is: How are we in our stewardship of taxpayers' money to evaluate Cambodian military needs and be prepared economically to meet those needs by January 1 deadline without at least some military staff to screen these requirements and to set up an estimated show-force-basis before the pay master begins to pay?

In effect, we have been talking about two kinds of MAAGs: One for normal logistics functions and for screening of ARK requirements under our new responsibility to provide direct economic aid to that army, and the other, military training mission. I believe it should be to latter that JCS requirement re phasing out French should apply and not to former. In fact, as Embtel 255 [5] makes evident, we hope to rely on French technical assistance in providing direct economic aid to Cambodia. In consequence, I should like authority to negotiate establishment of a MAAG for screening and logistics functions immediately with training function to be assumed later provided Cambodian Government agrees to eventual phasing out of French instructors.

In sum, we need (1) earmarking of $80 million for calendar 1955; (2) a logistics and fiscal MAAG before end of this year; (3) eventual little MAAG training component.

Please instruct.

McClintock

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[5] Telegram 255 from Phnom Penh, Nov. 15, concerning the aid program for Cambodia, is not printed. (851H.00/11-1554)

751G.00/11-2854: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

SECRET
PRIORITY

Washington, November 28, 1954—2:12 p.m.

1964. Paris tel 2239 repeated Saigon 322.[2] For Dillon and Heath. Believe we should stress positive aspects US policy and request reaffirmation Bao Dai's cooperation. Heath should review recent developments as reflected Paris files including Mendes talks and points made Bao Dai in recent Gibson visit and subsequent messages through Nguyen De.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent priority to Saigon as telegram 2161.

[2] Telegram 2239 from Paris, Nov. 27, read as follows: "Heath arrived last night and expects to pay farewell call on Bao Dai Tuesday November 30. Has Department or Saigon any suggestions for this conversation?" (123 Heath, Donald R.)

A. Points to be made include:

1. No change US policy toward Vietnam. US continues oppose extension Viet Minh power. Diem receives US support not because of personal attributes but because he represents nationalist, anti-Communist elements and is personally uncorruptible.

2. US opposes divisive elements in Vietnam who would attempt counter-evolutionary measures by introduction personalities long associated with French colonial rule or those who would attempt play Communist game through measures of softness toward Viet Minh. We feel strongly such policies, however well meaning, would cause early collapse Free Vietnam.

3. US aid and support is and will be directed toward strengthening Diem Government. We believe he should adopt urgently and vigorously reforms including broadening his government to bring in technical ability now lacking, counter propaganda, land redistribution and economic remedies tailored to fit new situation.

4. Bao Dai's efforts in same direction would be appreciated. His help in removal Hinh very useful. Must not permit premature return Hinh to negate opportunity for Diem to stabilize and improve his government. Bao Dai's continuing efforts keep Binh Xuan [*Xuyen*] from opposing Diem or joining with other divisive elements is urgent need. His efforts bring Army in to support Diem are desired. This is one of Collins' most important tasks.

5. French are aware of our policies and have agreed support Diem but are concerned his inability to administer will lead to collapse Free Vietnam.

6. US direct budgetary support of Vietnam will begin as soon as details arranged. This is positive step which should prove valuable asset Diem if properly handled.

B. We are interested Bao Dai's estimate of current and long range Viet Minh plans. Also his views on French policies.

C. Should try avoid discussion Bao Dai's return. If forced take position state as told him in your October talks. Situation Vietnam does not appear ripe. He can now exercise more useful authority by remaining absent for time being.

SALTZMAN

120.251G/11-2954 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 29, 1954—5 p. m.

2004. Repeated information Paris 643, Phnom Penh, Vientiane unnumbered. From Collins. Deptel 2112[1] paragraph 1 D.

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[1] Dated Nov. 24, p. 2303.

A. During remaining limited period of my mission I intend to concentrate on following major fields with view to achieving some concrete progress in each field:

1. *Vietnamese Armed Forces:*

(A) Agreement with French and Vietnamese on size, composition and mission of armed forces. In this regard I assume paragraph 3 B of Deptel 2126 [2] constitutes approval of my recommendations contained in parts I and II, Embtel 1830 [3] as basis for further consultations.

(B) Assumption by chief, MAAG on 1 January 54 [*55*] of responsibility for training Vietnamese armed forces. In accordance instructions contained in Deptel 2046,[4] I will not press for complete elimination of French trainers who, in any case, will be required in large numbers for next year at least. However, I interpret second subparagraph of paragraph 1, Deptel 2126 as approving my present view that we should not enter training field at all unless responsibility for this training be in hands of chief, MAAG under general direction of General Ely. O'Daniel must have authority to introduce American methods and to determine when and where American funds be expended to support technical and tactical schooling of officers, NCOs and specialists.

(C) Granting by French of full autonomy to Vietnamese armed forces by 1 July 1955. See part III, paragraph 1 Embtel 1830. French and US advisers to staff and command positions may have to be employed beyond 1 July 1955, but basic system we successfully employed in Korea must be used here under supervision of chief MAAG.

(D) Reorientation of army in support of government and vice versa. Diem has agreed to make inspection trip November 30–December 1 with Deputy Defense Minister Minh and Acting Chief of Staff Vy. They will visit area in South Cochin China recently liberated from Viet Minh, following which we hope Diem and Minh will make appropriate declarations of confidence in army and Vy will follow with declaration of loyalty of army to government.

(E) Employment of armed forces in pacification and rehabilitation of country.

(1) We hope proclamation by Vietnamese Government assigning to Vietnamese armed forces basic responsibility for pacification and internal security will follow Diem's inspection trip and appointment of new Defense Minister (see paragraph 2 below). Proclamation would also reaffirm confidence of government in army and include directive to Defense Minister that armed forces would cease political activities. Re this last point, Defense Minister has already put stop to use of

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[2] Dated Nov. 26, p. 2306.

[3] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

[4] Dated Nov. 19, p. 2271.

radio program "Voice of the Army" for anti-Government propaganda. Presidential directive would be implemented by general order to be published by General Vy.

(2) Detailed plans for employment of Vietnam forces for pacification mission now under study by special committee with representation from MAAG, French and Vietnamese armed forces. Deployment of one or more territorial battalions to each province to commence without delay.

2. *Strengthening Diem's Government:*

Key Ministries which must be properly filled at once if Diem's Government is to be strengthened are Defense and Interior, both now held by Prime Minister. As reported Embtel 1906 [5] I recommended to Diem that he appoint Quat Defense Minister. Diem has made indirect offer to Quat which latter is still considering. Meanwhile further analysis of primary tasks of Defense and Interior in the period immediately ahead have convinced me that primary missions of two Ministries are now basically identical: To establish and maintain internal security without which no other programs can hope to succeed. In interests of good administration and to avoid clashes between Ministries working for some time to come in essentially the same field, I have recommended to Diem, after consultation with Quat, that Prime Minister name Quat Vice Prime Minister for Defense and Interior, with separate deputies for Defense and Interior. Diem's reaction was that such an appointment would entail complete reorganization of government which I said should be undertaken promptly. If new proposal not acceptable I will urge immediate appointment of Quat as Defense Minister with a suitable South Vietnamese as Interior Minister. I shall continue actively to explore with Diem and other members of his Cabinet further steps to strengthen his government.

3. *Resettlement of refugees and displaced persons:*

This is a long-range program involving considerable sums of money and a considerable measure of economic reorientation. Representatives of USOM are now discussing with French Deputy Commissioner General Bordaz, the more immediate problems involved under this heading. Further advices will be forwarded upon completion these preliminary talks.

4. *Land reform:*

The question of land reform is likewise of very long range, but it ties directly into paragraph 3 above and certain aspects can and should be undertaken immediately. The government is said to own about 270,000 hectares of land some part of which is suitable for settlement by refugees. In addition there are sizeable tracts in the south now uncultivated or in zones being recovered from Viet Minh. A USOM-Embassy group is studying urgent phases of this program and should be ready to make recommendations soon. Meanwhile serious consideration is being given also to means of implementing excellent study made for USOM by Mr. Fippin which recommends far-reaching readjustment of land tenure and utilization pattern.

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[5] Dated Nov. 20, p. 2272.

5. *National Assembly:*

My observations to date have convinced me that it is imperative to set up soonest some kind of National Assembly to give Diem Government some measure of democratic backing and to provide training ground for political leaders. One plan for a National Assembly is now before the Cabinet. I am assigning Embassy officers to follow this question closely and advise me with respect to recommendations I should make in order that whatever Assembly is formed it may reinforce other aspects of program outlined herein.

6. *Financial and economic:*

(A) Country team committee has under urgent study problem of implementing direct aid to Vietnam in accordance with President's letter of October 23. Committee will propose soonest for Washington consideration exchange of notes with Vietnamese Government covering MDAP phase of direct aid, auditing controls we wish install, provision for US participation in drawing up military budget and problems of foreign exchange control arising under direct aid.

(B) While no specific program for propaganda and public information is listed above, our USIS Mission . . . is actively assisting Vietnam Ministry of Information in development of information program in support of specific projects listed. Ministry of Information agrees strengthening and some psychological warfare activities developed by Vietnam Army General Staff should be transferred either to Ministry of Information or President's office.

(C) In implementation of joint instructions to Ely and me (Deptel 2055),[6] I informed Ely November 26 about my desire to concentrate on subjects listed above. We have agreed to begin meeting today November 29 to discuss these subjects plus others Ely may wish to add.

Our method of working will be to assign individual officers of respective staffs to be primarily responsible for reaching joint position with regard to these matters. Ely and I will come into discussions as may be necessary to resolve differences developed in course of discussions by subordinates. In connection with above procedures I was happy to note Secretary's views as outlined in paragraph 1 C, Deptel 2112. At times it is necessary for members my Mission deal directly with Vietnam Government, informing Ely later.

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[6] Dated Nov. 20, p. 2274.

(D) After agreement has been reached with the French on policy and procedures for the implementation of programs in the fields indicated above, the Vietnamese Government will be invited to have representatives meet with us for the purpose of advising them in the execution of such programs. In the event that agreement with the French cannot be obtained in any of fields indicated, it will be necessary, after consultation with the Department, to negotiate directly with appropriate Vietnamese authorities to achieve necessary objectives here.

(E) Short-range elements of program should be implemented as a matter of urgency and be followed up as soon as possible by execution of long-range programs.

(F) Difficult now suggest date for judging results of crash program. Measures should be under continuous review and changed as needed. Though it is realized that early judgment of results is desirable, in order to allow adequate time for various facets of program to bear fruit, it is felt that initial formal judgment should be reserved until after first of year. If Secretary or his deputies attend proposed meeting SEATO Bangkok, January, suggest this might provide opportunity meeting here at that time to discuss program and review its chances of success.

(G) New Subject:

I informed Ely November 26 (Usfoto 646)[7] that US proposes make $100 million available for FEC support calendar 55, subject to further consultation with Congress and subject to Ely–Collins and two governments mutually agreeing on what is to be done in Vietnam. Ely expressed disappointment and stated that this would require complete review military program. On November 27 one of his officers informed me that Ely would not conclude minute of understanding on Vietnamese forces until impact of cut in FEC support could be studied. This may delay to some extent our carrying out proposals concerning these forces made this telegram and in Embtel 1830.

Kidder

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[7] Not printed.

120.251G/11-3054 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, November 30, 1954—6 p. m.

2024. Repeated information Paris 651, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. From Collins. Embtel 2004.[1]

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[1] *Supra.*

1. General Ely and I, together with small staffs, held first of series of meetings designed to canvass 6 major programs referred to in reftel, plus additional point on educational and technical training matters added at Ely's request. Today's meetings, in which General O'Daniel participated, devoted to reaching broad agreement on stabilization, organization and training of Vietnamese Army, and to employment of army in pacification programs.

2. Following are major results of discussion:

(*a*) Ely agreed very reluctantly to size and composition of Vietnamese armed forces along general lines my recommendation contained part 2, Embtel 1830,[2] previously furnished him as annex to minute of understanding contained Embtel 1854.[3] Ely stated Vietnamese armed forces of around 85,000 insufficient, particularly in light reduced US support FEC. However since he recognized that US was only source of financial support of Vietnamese armed forces he would have to agree, although military risk is great. We agreed element of military risk involved and that we would so inform our governments emphasizing importance of Manila pact. We agreed that our respective military staffs would discuss further details and work out manner of approach to Vietnamese, who have already registered unfavorable initial reaction to so large a reduction from present force level.

(*b*) Ely submitted his redraft of our minute of understanding on development and training of autonomous Vietnamese armed forces (Embtel 1854). Although he states he agrees that chief MAAG will have full responsibility for training under his overall strategic direction, he has difficulty with wording our paragraphs 3, 4, and 5. We are studying his redraft and at staff level will attempt arrive at agreed language. I emphasized I could not recommend any US participation in training unless chief MAAG had real authority to direct training subject to Ely's broad responsibility as Commander in Chief. I believe agreement can be reached on this point.

(*c*) Ely agreed that full autonomy would be given Vietnamese forces by July 1, 1955.

(*d*) Ely agreed to prompt placement of 3 or 4 US officers as advisers in Vietnamese Army staff and would like see that number augmented even from the start. His staff has worked out plan for introducing US officers with minimum difficulty. It was agreed General O'Daniel will contact Minh, Deputy Defense Minister, immediately to discuss plan with him and get his concurrence.

(*e*) Ely agreed with our concept that 1 or 2 Vietnamese Army battalions of territorial forces should promptly be put into field in each province under pacification program. We agreed it would be desirable to persuade Diem that Minister Defense, preferably Quat if appointed soon, undertake direction of program.

(*f*) Ely agreed to sign today minute of understanding on return of excess MDAP equipment (text in Embtel 1793[4] as changed by Deptel 2023).[5]

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[2] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

[3] Dated Nov. 16, p. 2259.

[4] See footnote 7, p. 2256.

[5] See footnote 6, p. 2280.

3. In course of discussion on size of Vietnamese forces, Ely stated US and France were assuming equal responsibility for security Vietnam, implying US responsibility is based on US decision not to support Vietnamese forces and FEC at levels that in themselves would provide adequate defense against external attack. I pointed out with great emphasis that I could not accept Ely statement that US responsibility is equal to that of France, and that US accepted responsibility only for giving aid and for assuming obligations under Manila pact.

KIDDER

751G.00/11-3054 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, November 30, 1954—6 p. m.

147. Repeated information Saigon 217, Phnom Penh unnumbered. I took up with Prime Minister[1] today in brief preliminary fashion topics listed Legtel 128 (repeated Saigon 190, Phnom Penh 16),[2] particularly reiterating US decision henceforth to furnish military and economic aid directly to Lao Government, requesting in this connection that Prime Minister furnish as soon as possible (1) proposed military budget for 1955, (2) his Government's views re first priorities under economic aid program and technical assistance. Katay replied he is most eager to get down to cases on these matters and will endeavor furnish information shortly. He added he would also seek US assistance in expanded information program.

Concerning Pathet Lao and two northern provinces, Prime Minister said he is sending to Samneua during first days December informal commission composed of former comrades Pathet leaders in Lao Issarak movement. Objective of commission will be sound out Pathets re conclusion an accord by which they would demobilize and be reintegrated into national community, in exchange for assurance democratic rights and free participation in early elections. Katay denied newspaper reports he intended offer Pathet leaders place in Government before elections, but I had impression he is not completely firm on this point. He desires hold elections March or April both in order get them over quickly and because campaigning much easier during dry season.

Prime Minister is most optimistic that understanding with Pathets will be worked out easily. If it is, he will despatch second more formal commission to conclude agreement. Meanwhile Governor Phong Saly already in his province and Governor Samneua will be despatched if

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[1] The government of Katay D. Sasorith came to power on Nov. 24. The Legation transmitted an analysis of the political situation in Laos and the new government in despatch 42 from Vientiane of Dec. 14. (751J.02/12-1454)

[2] Telegram 128 from Vientiane, Nov. 21, in which Yost listed the topics he planned to discuss with the new Prime Minister, is not printed. (751J.00/11-2154)

ICC lifts objection they have so far maintained. On other hand, if Pathets refuse accord on reasonable terms, Katay states intention to send in military governors with troops to reestablish royal authority. He remarked only serious security problem is in two northern provinces as remainder of country is quiet.

He expressed desire discuss all these matters with me at length in two or three days after he has had time to settle into office. As previously reported, Katay shares in fullest degree widespread Lao illusion that Pathet leaders "not really Communists" or at least are "Laos first and Communists afterwards". Fact that these have proven famous last words in several other countries has not yet shaken his conviction. Also disturbing is his apparent acceptance ICC veto on despatch Governor to Samneua.

While we should certainly oppose to full extent our influence any inclusion of Pathets in Government, I am not inclined object to projected negotiations per se since they seem best means, particularly in view total abdication ICC, of probing Communist intentions. Without sharing Lao illusions re Pathet leaders, I think there is fair prospect that (1) Communists will not consider it expedient from over-all viewpoint to recommence hostilities at this time, (2) Pathet rank and file may tend to dribble away. Under these circumstances acceptable settlement might possibly emerge, presumably after usual frustrating delays. If not Katay at least has the alternative in mind.

YOST

751G.00/12–154 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET HANOI, December 1, 1954—3 p. m.

467. Sent Saigon 598. Department pouch Paris. Brief end November survey Hanoi political situation follows:

(1) General atmosphere Hanoi still one of Viet Minh military occupation. Large numbers troops on or off duty seen everywhere. Few autos in town apart from ICC and Viet Minh military vehicles. Viet Minh police efficiently direct traffic which includes many bicycles but fewer cyclopousses than before French departure. Many Communist trappings of take-over times such as triumphal arches, banners, flags and huge portraits have disappeared but there are still processions uniformed children, outdoor exhibits, propaganda photos, song fests and pep rallies for troops. Much excavation and paving in progress at intersection avenues Briere de Lisle, Puginier and Paul Doumer

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts. On Dec. 8, Assistant Secretary Robertson forwarded a copy to Under Secretary Hoover as an attachment to a memorandum summarizing its basic points. (751G.00/2–854)

near Botanical Gardens. Western observers generally believe Viet Minh are constructing "Red Square" that site. Only one acceptable restaurant (Ritz, Chinese) and two bars remain open to public. Movies show almost exclusively Viet Minh and Russian films.

(2) Military and Administrative Committees still run local government although new Administrative Committee formed under Tran Duy Hung (1946 Viet Minh Mayor Hanoi) effected take-over eventually. DRV Central Government remains in Thai Nguyen. Ho, Giap and other leaders make few public appearances. Viet Minh [garble] functionaries have taken over most public buildings near Petit Lac. Some French observers here express opinion Viet Minh display less competence than anticipated in running city. Most French technicians still attached municipal services expected depart soon. About 70 Poles not attached ICC reported to be in town and some may be destined for municipal services. An ICC source reports that Russian, Chinese Communist and "pure" Viet Minh influences prevail in varying degrees from one branch of DRV government to another. No Western observer claims yet to have figured out exact power structure of Viet Minh regime.

(3) Viet Minh seem to be maintaining excessively strict security measures. Cannot tell whether this result lack of self-confidence or just force of habit. 11 p. m. to 5 a. m. curfew still in force and frequently applied before 11 at whim of military sentries and patrols. Army sentries guard Viet Minh government buildings, ICC quarters, Maison de France, Russian and Chinese Communist Embassies and sometimes US Consular residence. Police keep close watch US and UK Consulates. Infantry patrols and police bicycle patrols cover city at night. Travel outside city, even for ICC personnel, requires advance Viet Minh permission.

(4) ICC under Chairmanship Desai displays preoccupation preservation appearance unity of views among members and still seems more often than not to be "neutral" in favor of Viet Minh. Desai, under triple pressure from French, Viet Minh and Indian Government not in enviable spot. Nevertheless Indian position as he reveals it, if not clearly biased, at least predisposed in Viet Minh favor by Indian feeling of obligation to new Asian nations whether Communist or not. Polish delegate, Ogrodzinski, is 100 percent Communist agent. Canadian delegate, Lett, says only question about Ogrodzinski is whether his primary loyalty is to Moscow, Peking or Hanoi. Ogrodzinski has had some legal training and likes preface remarks with "according to generally accepted principles of international law". Lett says he has challenged this statement several times and Ogrodzinski never able satisfactorily to define principle nor cite authority therefor.

Lett finds own position extremely difficult and feels obliged act in good faith carry on ICC work and feels ICC has heavy responsibility since it is creating precedents in International Law by its operations. His outlook and principles are Western and completely different from those of Polish colleague and of Viet Minh. He has no illusions about either of latter and no intention changing own outlook or compromising with own principles. Therefore he does not know how long ICC can continue operate without reaching impasse.

(5) Positions foreign representatives differ widely. Russians and ChiComs have full diplomatic status and Indian Consulate completely under wing of ICC chairman. Sainteny at present enjoys almost completely regularized diplomatic status in relations with Viet Minh. He is very ambitious man with strong sense of mission in regard to ICC and apparently strong desire compensate for failure his previous mission here. His "team" is closely knit group of generally "left to center" persuasion with high degree personal loyalty to Sainteny. They frequently stress "reality" of Viet Minh power in North Vietnam and deprecate "mess" in Saigon. They have uniformly high regard for Mendes-France and apparently keep in close touch with his government. They appear to be thinking in terms of vague sort of Titoism based on traditional Vietnamese fear of Chinese domination and on need for French economic and technical assistance. They seem to take for granted spread of idea of "peaceful coexistence". Negotiations are now in progress re maintenance French economic "presence" after Viet Minh take-over of Haiphong. British ConGen enjoys "provisional recognition" as consular officer and, subject to [garble] has freedom to send and receive consular mail and to enter and leave Viet Minh territory. He is nevertheless subjected to minor harassments although to a lesser degree than American Consul. Viet Minh attitude towards American Consul so far indicates intention eventually to force us out by multiplication minor harassments. Apostolic Delegate avoiding identification with foreign community and stressing religious function. Only reported hostile Viet Minh act towards Delegate, according to Delegate's secretary has been newspaper attack on anti-Communist speech Delegate made in 1951.

(6) Press and radio continue follow general Communist line with US primary target. Allege US intention violate Geneva Agreement and attacks aid programs as economic aggression while seizing every pretext stress apparent divergencies views between US and France or UK. Render obsequious praise to Russia but accord only secondary status to ChiComs. Trumpet praises for alleged Viet Minh accomplishments in economic, cultural, political and military spheres. Express approval activities ICC. In attacking French generally concentrate

on military and avoid attacks Sainteny or, with rare exceptions to date, Mendes-France.

Brief economic survey will follow.[2]

CORCORAN

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[2] The economic survey was transmitted in telegrams 470 and 471 from Hanoi, Dec. 2. The conclusion, set forth in telegram 471, was that there was evidence of economic hardship in Hanoi. However, the hardiness of the Vietnamese population and the authoritarian nature of the Viet Minh regime permitted the absorption of considerable hardship without the development of a serious economic crisis. (851G.00/12-254)

751G.00/12-154 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, December 1, 1954—3 p. m.

2031. Repeated information Paris 653, Singapore 20, London 24, Phnom Penh, Vientiane unnumbered. From Collins. Yesterday Malcolm MacDonald UK Commissioner General in Southeast Asia, accompanied by British Ambassador Stephenson, called on me and on Chargé.

We had extremely frank discussion introduced by MacDonald's statement that he had come here to review situation in Associated States and specifically to see me and offer any help which he or British Ambassador could offer in supporting firmly determined policy of French, British and American Governments support Diem and effort create stable situation.

I outlined most recent developments including Diem's present inspection trip South Vietnam and stressed our belief in necessity strengthen Diem's Government, particularly in Defense, Interior, and Information Ministries. MacDonald entirely agreed my analysis situation and estimate of Quat as essential for Defense post. He asked whether it might not be better at present time while process strengthening Government underway to effect general broadening of Government, including introduction Ng Hiep in Public Health. He also advanced arguments for Tam in Interior, but did not push point unduly in knowledge Diem's adamant refusal accept Tam. He finally agreed strengthening of Cabinet by stages better than attempt to make overall reorganization in face extremely complicated internal political situation.

I outlined to MacDonald six fields of activity in which I hoped get constructive action under way during my mission of limited duration:

(1) Reorganization Vietnamese Armed Forces and establishment sound relations between Army and civil authorities.

(2) Strengthening Diem's Government.
(3) Resettlement refugees and displaced persons.
(4) Land reform.
(5) Establishment of national assembly.
(6) Financial and economic matters relating to direct aid.

I gave MacDonald round figures of my recommendations for Vietnamese force levels and costs US willing assume, and with regard FEC gave him a general idea of force level we might be willing support. I told him I collaborating closely with Commissioner General Ely and that US not attempting in any way replace France in Indochina nor willing accept responsibility for defense area which clearly remains in French hands.

I completed my outline with explanation my concept of strategic facts of life in Free Vietnam. I told MacDonald that my directive calls for creation of force large enough only to assure internal security, which with FEC would act as buffer to contain at least temporarily any aggressive action. In view of time available before election date mentioned in Geneva accords and tremendous amount of work necessary create strong Vietnamese Army I believed force 80,000 to 85,000 men realistic. However, the small size this force plus the French Expeditionary Corps, if established at a level consonant with amount of funds we willing put into its support, necessitates finding some other means guarantee safety of area, that other means being, I said, Manila Pact. That Pact must be ratified as soon as possible and at time of ratification, or shortly thereafter, declaration should be made by signatories announcing determination give it full support and resist any aggressive actions in Southeast Asia. MacDonald said British would like to have seen a pact with more teeth in it, and agreed my comments that pact to be of any use must present real threat to Communists.

MacDonald said that in conversations with President Diem he would support my recommendation of inclusion Quat in Cabinet and he and British Ambassador would be glad help wherever they could. However, he had two comments he felt he should make (1) He unhappy about our plans re reduction in size Vietnamese Army as he believes large Vietnamese Army one of essential prerequisites for recreation national morale, and (2) he believes British, French, Australian, and New Zealand representatives should get together soonest to outline military defense plans for Southeast Asia. To include Southeast Asian nations would be to invite press publicity on following day.[1]

KIDDER

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[1] Collins and MacDonald held a subsequent meeting (Dec. 9), which was reported in telegram 2188 from Saigon, Dec. 10. (751G.00/12–1054)

751G.00/12-154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL PARIS, December 1, 1954—6 p. m.

2290. From Heath. I saw Bao Dai yesterday. He was obviously pleased over his decision to dismiss Hinh. He regretted that Hinh's actions had made this necessary but Hinh's intemperate press declaration against the Diem government "right in my (Bao Dai's) face" left him no alternative. He had told Hinh that when the latter arrived at Paris he should keep his mouth shut and that he, Bao Dai, would arrange a reconciliation between Hinh and Diem. Hinh had acted childishly and "impossibly".

In accordance with Deptel sent Paris 1964,[1] I emphasized there was no change in U.S. policy toward Vietnam and explained that Diem received our support because he represented nationalist and anti-Communist elements and because of his personal honesty. Bao Dai said that he was firmly supporting Diem but now that he had settled the Hinh problem it was up to Diem to make good.

He knew both Diem's virtues and his weaknesses. His virtues were his honesty and the fact that he represented an ideal. His weaknesses were his distrust of people, his unwillingness to delegate authority and his desire to keep all the strings of administration in his own hands. Diem should now form a new government not based on a union of sects and political parties but enlisting capable, honest nationalists irrespective of their party or sect affiliations. He thought that Diem should certainly include Quat in the government and give him real authority, perhaps as Minister of Defense. There were a number of Vietnamese nationalists in France and in Vietnam who are now somewhat ashamed of their "fence-sitting" and are really anxious to serve Vietnam in its hour of peril.

Bao Dai said he had no idea what tactics Ho Chi-Minh would employ at this time but he was certain that the latter would try every means, fair or foul, to swallow South Vietnam. He believed that Mendes-France for the moment was sincerely determined to aid in the preservation of free Vietnam but remarked that in the latter's entourage there were many who favored a policy of peaceful coexistence and collaboration with the Vietminh. He considered Mendes-France, however, to be too intelligent to try to play a double game at this time, playing both free Vietnam and the Vietminh, since that would alienate American support of France.

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[1] Dated Nov. 28, p. 2314.

Bao Dai said that he had no immediate plans to return to Vietnam since his return must be "carefully prepared". He was "bored to death", however, with staying in France and wanted to return to Vietnam as soon as it would be appropriate. He remarked that his son had now entered military school in France and was undergoing severe discipline with good spirit. I told him that it was my government's belief that he would exercise his authority more usefully by remaining away from Vietnam at this juncture.

Bao Dai was very scornful over the efforts to promote Buu Hoi as either Prime Minister or a sort of viceroy. He said this was a maneuver of certain French interests. Buu Hoi was not a bad man and was a good scientist but utterly incapable politically and with no following in Vietnam.

I said to Bao Dai that the President's idea of sending General Collins as special representative would help solve expeditiously many of the problems now confronting Vietnam. Bao Dai said he had a pleasant memory of the General's visit to Vietnam in 1951.

Last night I spoke with Luyen, Diem's brother and Ambassador at Large. Luyen said that Bao Dai had decided to get rid of Hinh some time before but had delayed action until he was certain that Hinh had no real following in the Vietnamese Army and was not backed by the French Government.

Luyen said that he favored Bao Dai's return to Vietnam and in the relatively near future. Bao Dai should return not as an absolute ruler but as a sort of constitutional monarch. However, Bai Dai would be allowed to govern directly the high plateau region in South Vietnam peopled by various non-Vietnamese hill tribes. Diem had promised Bao Dai that latter could govern the crown lands. Luyen insisted, as he has before, that Bao Dai was not the profiteer that the foreign press and rumor considered him to be. Luyen said that most of the exchange transfers had benefited members of Bao Dai's entourage such as Nguyen De, Giao and Buu Loc and that Bao Dai really received only the "crumbs of such transactions." He asserted that Tran Van Huu, De, Buu Loc and Giao had larger fortunes than Bao Dai.

In conclusion, Luyen told me that he had just intimated to the French Government that the appointment of Daridan as successor to General Ely as commissioner general would be unwelcome to the Diem government since Daridan, rightly or wrongly, was considered in Vietnam as opposed to Diem.

DILLON

751G.00/12-154 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, December 1, 1954—7 : 35 p. m.

2213. Eyes only for McClintock from Robertson. Department concerned repercussions which might result if Cambodians pressed to agree to phase out all French instructors as desired by JCS.

In recent talks Mendes-France demonstrated French sensitivity over exclusive U.S. military training and this issue forced in Cambodia might have serious far-reaching effect U.S.-French relations, and U.S. objectives Associated States.

British already on record opposing U.S. MAAG Cambodia and exclusive U.S. training there probably would bring strong protests from UK as well as International Control Commission. Despite your belief Cambodia would agree to French training phase-out, your reports indicate the Cambodians would do so with great timerity and reluctance.

If you agree, Department might ask Defense reconsider JCS recommendation regarding French phase-out as prerequisite establishment MAAG and suggest compromise formula similar that Collins has suggested for Viet-Nam in which U.S. would have responsibility for training but French instructors also would be utilized under U.S. authority.

You may wish discuss problem with Collins and O'Daniel and solicit their recommendations direct to JCS through military channels.[2]

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Purnell of PSA. Also sent to Phnom Penh as telegram 176.

[2] In telegram 319 from Phnom Penh, Dec. 3, McClintock requested that the Department of Defense be asked to reconsider the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (751G.5 MSP/12-354)

751G.00/12-254

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] December 2, 1954.

Participants: The Secretary
Ambassador Bonnet
Minister de Juniac
Mr. Merchant

During the course of a call on another matter, the French Ambassador raised with the Secretary the importance the French attached to avoidance of any discrimination by the U.S. against individuals or firms which during the armistice were continuing to operate in North Vietnam. He recalled that Mendes-France had raised this when he was in Washington and that Mr. Young had indicated that, as a result of talks with Treasury, the preliminary indications were that the answer would be favorable in principle. The Ambassador expressed the hope that they could have a definitive answer soon. The Secretary promised to look into the matter and see what could be done.

751G.00/12-354

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)[1]

TOP SECRET PARIS, December 3, 1954.

OFFICIAL–INFORMAL

DEAR LIVIE: The enclosed memorandum from Bill Gibson regarding his conversation with Jean Daridan describes such strong statements on the part of Daridan that I felt it better to send it along to you personally, as an indication of how difficult the situation has become in the minds of some Frenchmen.

I am also attaching a short memorandum containing Don Heath's comments on Daridan's statement.

Best wishes.

Sincerely, DOUG

[Enclosure 1]

Memorandum of Conversation, by the First Secretary of the Embassy in France (Gibson)[2]

TOP SECRET [PARIS,] November 30, 1954.

I had lunch alone today with Jean Daridan. He was in a depressed mood and soon set off on Indochina. What he had to say was so disturbing that I thought it best to outline the high points to you in a restricted memorandum rather than in the usual widely distributed "memorandum of conversation".

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[1] The source text is accompanied by a handwritten note by Young of PSA to Assistant Secretary Robertson, date stamped the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Dec. 13. The note read as follows:

"Mr. Robertson—

"1. Appointment of Daridan to replace Ely would be a calamity. It would make a mockery of Collins' mission. We had best consider whether Collins should stay if Daridan becomes No. 1 in Saigon. How would there be real cooperation?

"2. Heath's memo is borne out by the reports available here.

"3. I feel Daridan has grossly exaggerated and distorted the situation in so far as the Americans are concerned. KT Young."

[2] This memorandum was directed to Ambassador Dillon, Minister Achilles, and Counselor of Embassy Joyce.

As you know, Daridan was French Minister in Washington for six years and is now Deputy High Commissioner in Indochina. He has enjoyed the respect and friendship of virtually all American officials who have been associated with French affairs in recent years. I am sure they would agree with me that there has never been reason to question his honesty and integrity.

He admitted that General Ely wanted to leave Indochina as soon as possible and that he was the leading candidate to replace him as High Commissioner. He said, however, that he had just informed Guy La Chambre that he could not accept the job. His reason was simply, as told La Chambre, that he could "no longer agree to support a policy which no intelligent Vietnamese or Frenchman with any knowledge of Indochina believed in,["] which had no basis in reason, which had been invented by the "American Special Services" (des Services Speciaux Americains) and which would result in the absorption of Free Vietnam by the Viet Minh in the near future. I asked Daridan to explain himself and he said he was making a distinction between the Embassy in Saigon and the other "American Services" operating in Indochina because he was convinced that the Embassy had recognized the error of supporting the Ngo Dinh Diem formula early in the game but the Embassy's voice was drowned by that of the "other U.S. representatives" in Indochina and the sympathy with which their suggestions were received in Washington.

I asked Daridan what La Chambre's answer had been to his refusal to take the job of High Commissioner. He replied that he had begged him not to make his decision final and to carry on for the time being. Daridan agreed to return to Saigon next week before making any final decision. If he should stay after that he wants to go to Washington in January to try and convince the Departmental officials there of the error of the present U.S. policy.

U.S. intelligence activities in Indochina were, he said, madness (fou) and although money spoke as well in Indochina as in any other place in the Orient it was not enough to win political battles. Our attachment to Ngo Dinh Diem, apparently on the grounds that he was the only honest man in Vietnam, had, he said, become a fixation. Daridan said that although Diem himself was honest his advisers, in whose power he was, were not so the end result was the same. He referred to the latest scandal in Saigon wherein it is alleged that the Ministers charged with the resettlement of refugees from the North have in some instances pocketed a portion of the sums set aside for that purpose. He referred to Ngo Dinh Diem's family advisers with contempt.

Diem, a religious fanatic, was putty in the hands of the crafty Vietnamese, Daridan claimed. He expressed the conviction that unless something radical were done now, Vietnam would be taken over by the Viet Minh by the next "tet" (February 10). This would be accomplished according to the method now being used—gradual infiltration, province by province. The final step would be a *coup d'état* in Saigon which would be easily accomplished after the Viet Minh had thoroughly infiltrated the provinces. One morning everyone would awaken to find the Viet Minh in control in Saigon. The Diem Government's utter ineffectiveness was advancing the Viet Minh purpose.

Daridan spoke in enthusiastic terms of Ambassador Heath and Kidder. He referred to Heath as a martyr—a man who had given his utmost to setting things right and had lost because he was operating against hopeless odds within his own Government. He had been a victim of other American Services in Vietnam which were so overextended, overlapping and generally complex that it was impossible to set an orderly policy and adhere to it. He remarked that while Heath was doing his best to set things straight the "American intelligence Services", STEM Mission and MAAG were going off on separate tangents and acting as though each individual functionary set his own policy and followed it. One often got the impression that their principal objective was to remove all French influence and prestige as quickly as possible—not because they wished to acquire it themselves but simply because they did not wish the French to enjoy it.

When I expressed satisfaction at the decisiveness of Bao Dai's action yesterday in dismissing General Hinh, Daridan said he was not at all surprised because the French had ascertained that Ngo Dinh Diem has just "bought" Bao Dai and received his promise to dismiss Hinh in exchange. This had been accomplished both by making "suitable financial arrangements" and other promises to Bao Dai. The financial considerations made to Bao Dai by Diem had been made possible by "U.S. Special Services" who supplied the necessary funds. Daridan observed that Diem is becoming as clever in making Vietnamese "deals" of this kind as any of his predecessors and was particularly clever in getting money from "the American Services".

Daridan said that even if American aid for the French Expeditionary Corps were forthcoming he did not see how a move to repatriate the French Expeditionary Corps could be avoided. France, for all practical purposes, would soon have to wash her hands of Indochina and hand the problem over to us, lock, stock and barrel. He said that there was a great deal of talk at the moment in the Assembly "corridors" concerning the budgetary problem which the uncertainty of U.S. aid for the Expeditionary Corps in Vietnam was causing. The talk included the possible need to find funds to repatriate the Expeditionary Corps (it is noted that Rotvand's privately-circulated letter made a reference to this latter point today as well).

He remarked that the Government's principal purpose in seeking U.S. aid to maintain the Expeditionary Corps in Vietnam was not motivated by any belief that South Vietnam could be saved from the Viet Minh but rather by the French obligation to protect the lives of the French community, including Eurasians and loyal Vietnamese, in free Vietnam. Daridan did not think this would take long for more and more of the French and Eurasians in South Vietnam were seeing the light and preparing to leave permanently. Once they were in the majority and the Indochina lobby in the Assembly ceased to function the Government would, he thought, take the decisive step of casting off lines. At that point they would be glad to have us do whatever we liked in Indochina without offering any further comment. For, he stated bitterly, that was what we were doing anyway.

I was considerably taken aback by the depth of Daridan's bitterness and intensity of his views. He appeared to be anxious to relieve himself of a burden which was weighing heavily upon him. His observations were delivered in a long monologue which afforded me little opportunity to speak. His customary cold professional approach was notably absent. I did, of course, speak of the need for working together, the fact that Diem must be given a full chance to succeed before being condemned, the fallacy of attempting to do business with the Viet Minh, the success of the September and November high level Franco-US conversations on Indochina in Washington, etc. When I said that the most recent Mendès–Dulles conversations had improved the degree of Franco-U.S. coordination on Indochina and cited the joint instructions which had gone forth to Ely and Collins in Saigon Daridan asked whether we knew that Collins was referred to in Saigon as "the Governor General".

Note—P.S.—Since drafting the above, the articles by Guillain on Indochina have appeared in *Le Monde*. As you know, they have created a sensation in Paris and cover much of the same territory which Daridan did in his conversation with me. The second of the three articles touches on U.S. activities in Saigon under the heading "Mr. Diem, American puppet". It states *inter alia;* "The young Turks of the Embassy and the American services who are constantly being multiplied tear each other apart in their rivalry as do the sects. They see in Mr. Diem only what they consider as his qualities. He is not only, in their eyes, an honest man and ardent Catholic, but he is also the first Chief of the Government since independence; he has above all the merit of affirming that independence by his anti-colonial and anti-French sentiments. Finally, he has that one rare quality, so precious in Asia,—he is pro-American. He is so much so and with such imprudence that he doesn't even hesitate to install American advisers in the corridors of the Palais Norodom and have them appear with him at his side. The

Americans, on the other hand, push themselves ahead with great naivete. It was General O'Daniel himself who, in Saigon, went to have a frightful scene with General Hinh, the adversary of the Prime Minister, and to demand his resignation. It was Senator Mansfield in Washington who announced that American aid dollars would go to Mr. Diem but would be suppressed if he were replaced. In order to extricate the Prime Minister from his dangerous isolation the American Services buy for him the support of the Cao Daists and the Hoa Hao who, by means of a big fat check payable in New York, have passed from the most active opposition to the most firm support (of the Government). Behind the honest Mr. Diem corruption is more ripe than ever, protected by the shadow of Bao Dai who succeeded in reviving it".

[Enclosure 2]

Memorandum by Ambassador Donald R. Heath

SECRET PARIS, December 3, 1954.

Re Memorandum of Conversation between Mr. Gibson and Jean Daridan of November 30[3]

I agree with Mr. Gibson that we have never had reason to question Daridan's honesty, integrity and candor in his dealings with the American Embassy Saigon, but I do question very much Daridan's judgment on Vietnamese affairs with which he has had only brief firsthand familiarity.

He has swallowed a lot of anti-American stories. There is no basis for his statement "our intelligence activities" in Vietnam are "madness".

It is true that there was some low-level grafting in connection with the resettlement of refugees and that Minister Chuong, no longer in the Cabinet, decamped with some $25,000, apparently fearing that he was to be assassinated by the Binh Xuyen. However, it can be said that the grafting in refugee resettlement has been quite small when one considers the amount of money that has been expended and I believe it can be stamped out. Neither do I agree with Daridan that the Vietminh could easily succeed in a *coup d'état* in Saigon.

It is true that within both the STEM Mission and USIS organizations there are some individuals who are unrealistically anti-French and it has been a constant struggle to make them understand that the French are an inescapable and necessary element in the picture at present, and that we must get along with them.

Daridan's statement that Bao Dai had promised to dismiss Hinh in exchange for money from Diem is not quite true. Bao Dai hoped to keep Hinh quiet in France for a space and then let him return not as chief of staff but in some other military position. Hinh made such action impossible by his irresponsible attacks against the Vietnamese Government in public press statements in Paris. After these statements there was nothing left for Bao Dai to do but fire him.

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[3] Above.

All in all, I think Daridan is too pessimistic. His statements, however, do point up the necessity of constant friendly consultation with the French authorities in Vietnam and constant consideration of French susceptibilities with regard to Vietnam. After Dien Bien Phu and the Armistice the French in Indochina have had a very bitter inferiority complex.

DONALD R. HEATH

751G.00/12-354 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, December 3, 1954—7 p. m.

2346. Repeated information Saigon 337. During discussion with La Chambre last night, he outlined some of his thinking regarding Indochina problem which seems of considerable import.

He said that critical date for French was next January 15. Unless a stable and strong government was functioning in South Vietnam by that time, he said, French would have to take the decision to evacuate. A stable and strong government could either be a re-organized Diem government with competent individuals functioning as Ministers of Defense and Interior or it could be a new government. It could not be a mere continuation of the present situation.

La Chambre said that the French estimate the civilian population to be evacuated will run to three or four hundred thousand. This total includes French families and their dependents, and those Vietnamese who were (1) so compromised because of their pro-French attitude as to be unsafe in the event of a Viet Minh takeover, and (2) wished to be evacuated. Because of the long distance to be covered between Vietnam and France, it would take until the latter part of the summer to complete such an evacuation. Only after it had been completed would it be possible to evacuate the French Expeditionary Corps. If the operation were to begin in March, the decision would have to be taken around January 15 in order to mobilize the necessary shipping, and the whole operation could not be completed much before the end of the year.

I was not able to pursue the subject further and it was not entirely clear to me why La Chambre felt that the evacuation had to be completed by the end of 1955, rather than the early spring or summer of 1956, which would make it possible to put off the beginning of the operation for a few months. We will attempt to follow this up in further talks with La Chambre. In any event, discussion indicates that French consider complete evacuation must precede any possible takeover by Viet Minh and that such an evacuation will take nearly a year to carry out after initial major decision is taken.[1]

DILLON

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[1] In telegram 2483 from Paris, Dec. 8, Ambassador Dillon reported that Clarac, La Chambre's Cabinet Director, had linked the withdrawal of the FEC to the decision of the United States to provide one-third of the funds necessary for its maintenance. Clarac stated that with the withdrawal of the FEC by the end of 1955, it was expected that several hundred thousand civilians would desire evacuation. Clarac also indicated that there was no relationship between the probable French decision to accelerate the withdrawal of the FEC (which would necessitate the civilian evacuation), and the political situation in Vietnam including the fortunes of the Diem government. (751G.00/12–854)

Dillon reported a somewhat different view of French policy in telegram 2434 of the same date, based on discussions with officials of the Foreign Ministry. It was their position that unless the Diem government had given evidence of improvement by mid-January, it should be replaced. However, the new regime would be given a chance to succeed before France made a final decision to withdraw its forces and civilians who wished to leave. (751G.00/12–854)

In telegram 2448 from Paris, December 9, Dillon provided the following analysis:

"We believe French for most part sincerely convinced that unless either Diem Government profoundly modified and strengthened or alternative strong government established by sometime during January at latest, Vietminh erosion in South Vietnam will have proceeded to point where Vietminh can reasonably expect to become principal force present in south by time July 1956 elections. However, we wish refer this context our comments Embtel 2080 regarding fundamental issues involved Vietnamese situation which we feel transcend and tend aggravate more immediate, though critical, problem achieving political stability South Vietnam.

"We do not believe French decision accelerate withdrawal Expeditionary Corps Vietnam and to evacuate those French civilians and Vietnamese who wish leave as result thereof, will affect appreciably French activities Laos and Cambodia, or French desire to maintain its influence maximum levels those two countries, particularly economical and cultural fields, so long as it appears reasonably certain Cambodian and Lao borders are to be held by force if necessary against possible future intensification Vietminh penetration." (751G.00/12–954)

For telegram 2080, Nov. 15, see p. 2246. For the full text of telegram 2448, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 10, pp. 809–810.

751G.00/12–354 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, December 3, 1954—6 p. m.

158. Repeated information Saigon 227, Phnom Penh unnumbered. Reference Legtel 147, repeated Saigon 217.[1] Foreign Minister[2] informs me plans for negotiations with Pathet-Lao somewhat altered. Pathet delegation headed by Prince Suphanuvong, Singkapo, and Khaisone will be invited next week to confer with Katay himself in Vientiane. It is felt Pathets may be less under Viet influence here than

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[1] Dated Nov. 30, p. 2321.

[2] Phoui Sannanikone.

in Samneua or Khonkay. Phoui, however, doubts Pathets, particularly Suphanuvong, will accept invitation and expects them drag feet until after elections, unless offered place Lao Government. He invited attention to statement by Suphanuvong over Viet radio November 20 to effect that it had been agreed at Geneva Pathets would withdraw from large areas Laos they had occupied and regroup in two northern provinces "on condition that the political question would be resolved through general elections organized in local collaboration between Royal Government and all Pathet Lao forces, that a coalition government be created and national unification realized in conformity with armistice agreements and despite all difficulties and obstacles".

Phoui stated Pathets had proposed coalition government in Geneva, that pressure had been exerted on Souvanna Phouma by French to accept but that he, Phoui, had successfully resisted. He continues to be strongly opposed but confirmed my apprehension Prime Minister is not firm on this point and might wish accept Pathet participation in government if this were only means reaching agreement. Katay and several other colleagues, Phoui said, continue believe Pathet leaders not really Communists.

I cited usual historical evidence to show illusory character this belief and pointed out it is not shared by Crown Prince. I also said very earnestly I was sure my government would feel obliged to reconsider entire question aid to Laos if Communists should participate in Lao Government. I urged that, if Pathets made impossible demands, refused to negotiate, or insisted on retaining control northern provinces, Lao Government appeal to Geneva signatories and perhaps UN, with view to convicting Communists before world opinion of gross violation Geneva accords.

Phoui expressed full agreement these views. He said entire Cabinet flying Luang Prabang tomorrow to meet under chairmanship Crown Prince and review situation. He would present our views to Savang and to his colleagues and would assure me no decisions would be taken without consultation with US.

I shall raise this matter again with Katay next week.

Yost

751J.5/12–354 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET VIENTIANE, December 3, 1954—10 a. m.
PRIORITY

160. Repeated information priority Saigon 229, Phnom Penh unnumbered, Paris 38. Department pass Department of Army. Saigon

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

for Chief MAAG. Reference Legation telegram 150; repeated Saigon 219.[2] Minister Defense called yesterday to present projected Lao military budget for calendar 1955 and to request United States credits covering first quarter be opened by December 15 in order to allow time despatch pay and maintenance funds to units in remote provinces by January 1. When I protested shortness of time and pointed out my government must have time examine carefully proposed expenditures this magnitude, he expressed regret and said data received only last week-end from French headquarters Saigon (this is correct). He emphasized French funds for payment troops and purchase food would not be available after January 1 and that if US credits not forthcoming in time results would be disastrous. At Minister's suggestion Military Attaché and Legation officers later went over figures in detail with chief French training mission and French Chef de l'Intendance.

Proposed budget totals 21.6 billion French francs as compared with thirteen billion for calendar 1954. Four principal reasons for increase are: (1) approximately 6,000 of 30,000 Lao forces under arms this year were until October attached to French Union forces and under French Union budget (no figures re 1954 cost these forces available here); (2) projected increase about 1,000 in Lao service forces agreed by Franco-Lao high military committee in October; (3) large projected increase in size *gendarmerie* (which is to some extent compensated by decline in size commandoes); (4) increased engineering expense for building military installations and for repairs strategic roads and bridges destroyed by war (road repair program to be divided between military and civil authorities with former taking lion's share because of availability labor); (5) increase size French training mission up to 1,500 (as provided Geneva accord) to compensate in part for withdrawal French Union officer cadres. Breakdown proposed 1955 budget by main headings follows (in million francs): (1) French training mission 3038; (2) Lao officers pay 397; (3) Lao troop pay 3205; (4) commandoes pay 378; (5) civilian personnel 32; (6) family allowances 424; (7) benefits to dependents of casualties 400; (8) food 3039; (9) clothing 2325; (10) medical 200; (11) transportation costs 265; (12) miscellaneous (including proportionate share expense MAAG Saigon) 82; (13) armament 192 (as compared 613 for 1954); (14) automotive and pool 1302; (15) signal 281; (16) engineer (roads and bridges) 1955; (17) *gendarmerie* 1270 (compared 294 for 1954); (18) aviation 610 (compared 152 for 1954 since French have turned over several light aircraft to Laos).

Present approximate strength military forces is 31,000 consisting of 13 infantry battalions, 17 light battalions, 40 national guard companies, 25 commandoes, 1 para battalion, 1 para company, 3 transport companies, 6 engineer companies, 2 reconnaissance companies, service, headquarters and signal installations. There is very grave shortage officer cadres. French estimate 9,000 minimum required for present forces (we would estimate much larger minimum requirement), whereas only 800 presently available and there is already heavy political pressure to demobilize approximately 300 civil servants now holding reserve commissions in forces. French agreed this situation made reduction Lao forces desirable but feared psychological effect pressing for substantial reduction at this critical moment. However, they suggested 3,000–4,000 overdue for discharge might be dropped shortly without serious repercussions.

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[2] In telegram 150 from Vientiane, Dec. 1, not printed, Yost reported that it was the understanding of French authorities that the United States was assuming financial support for the armed forces of Laos. (751G.00/12–154)

French emphasized that, while they expect to be paying bills as late as April for some items ordered under 1954 budget, they have no authority expend single franc after December 31 for current expenses such as payment [garble] etc. Obviously if these expenses not met army would soon disintegrate.

This situation obviously poses serious problem for United States. We cannot permit collapse armed forces at critical point in frontline against Communism, particularly when we have hitherto been supporting these forces indirectly and have informed Lao Government our aid, including aid of this kind, will after January 1 be furnished directly. On other hand we do not wish to buy pig in poke or agree support forces which are excessive or beyond Lao capability providing officer cadres. From political viewpoint, it would be most unwise to undermine Lao faith in United States support by refusing indispensable aid or proposing drastic cut in Lao forces just when show-down with Pathet Laos over northern provinces is impending. On other hand, there is advantage retaining greatest possible bargaining power in United States hands for immediate future in order be in position exert maximum pressure against possible Katay–Pathet deal involving entry latter into government or other dangerous features. While we do not consider this contingency likely, we should nevertheless be fully prepared to deal with it if it comes.

Under these circumstances we recommend (*a*) immediate advice to Lao Government that credits will be opened December 15 to cover one-sixth (two months requirements) of amounts listed under items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 in third paragraph this message for purposes specified; (*b*) MAAG Saigon give immediate detailed examination to projected budget and submit recommendations to Washington and Legation Vientiane by December 20; (*c*) on basis these recommendations interested Washington agencies, by January 1 if possible, agree on appropriate amount to be advanced for all items military budget for first quarter (expenses French training mission might form subject separate Franco-United States negotiations, though must be remembered French Mission absolutely indispensable to present effectiveness Lao forces); (*d*) in meantime Legation be instructed re character memo understanding to be negotiated with Lao Government; (*e*) interested Washington agencies decided desired degree and manner of United States control to be exercised over Lao military expenditures and despatch necessary personnel to Vientiane by January 1 if possible (in view lack housing United States personnel must be minimum and control exercised largely through French); (*f*) during first quarter 1955 careful review Lao armed forces and military budget, plus assessment political developments, then form basis United States aid for balance calendar year. For United States budgetary purposes, however, we should plan on likelihood our having to expend, if external security and internal stability of Lao are to be maintained, sum not far below that proposed in Lao budget outlined above. Military Attaché concurs.

Please instruct urgently.

YOST

120.251G/12–454 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, December 4, 1954—midnight.

2075. Repeated information Paris 662, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. From Collins. Re Embassy telegram 2004.[1] Third of series meetings held with Ely December 2 re refugee resettlement and program for land reform. Responsible Mission senior staff members both French and US participated.

1. Refugee program

(A) Conclusion reached that in light of magnitude of effort and conditions existing progress to date is remarkable.

(B) Ultimate rehabilitation of refugees in manner which will contribute most to economic and social strengthening of Vietnam requires as soon as possible:

(1) Unified national plan for rehabilitation providing for productive use of available lands for resettlement of refugees, displaced persons and discharged military personnel;

(2) Financial assistance beyond emergency subsistence and shelter to provide for total occupational rehabilitation of this value economic and political component;

(3) Complete coordination of Vietnamese, US and French efforts in providing aid.

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[1] Dated Nov. 29, p. 2315.

2. Land reform

(A) To provide for prompt and total productive use of farm lands through emergency requisition and lease by government of idle farm lands on three-year basis for resettling refugees, displaced farm families and discharged military personnel pending decisions on full land reform.

(B) Establishment within Ministry of Agriculture of necessary administrative organization to implement this program including provision of credit and cooperative facilities.

(C) Continuing study and [garble] of ordinances of June 1953 re this subject to provide more generally acceptable and workable program relating to: (1) landlord-tenant relationships; (2) maximum land holdings; (3) redistribution of family-sized farm units; (4) recovery of government-owned unused agricultural concessions; and (5) agricultural credit and cooperatives.

3. Agreed to continue conferences and communicate proposals at subordinate levels. Papers further elaborating above points will be exchanged by working groups.

KIDDER

120.251G/12–654 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, December 6, 1954—6 p. m.

2108. Repeated information Paris 665, Vientiane 101, Phnom Penh 157. Limit distribution. From Collins. At end of first month in Vietnam I submit herewith my current analysis of situation here:

1. Progress of negotiations with French in developing agreed programs outlined in Embtel 2004 [2] has been satisfactory. Substantial accord has been reached in broad policies in all fields. Ely wishes further discussion 6 December on means of strengthening Diem government and organization of propaganda and public information. Same date we will discuss minute of understanding on training. We may have some difficulty in getting French to agree to clear-cut responsibility of Chief MAAG for advice to Vietnamese on organization and training of Vietnamese armed forces and to placing all French as well as American advisors and trainers under direction of O'Daniel. I consider these points essential.

2. Ely has assured me that he will see that Franco-American policy of actively supporting Diem government will not be sabotaged by subordinates, many of whom are still strongly anti-Diem. He has

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] Dated Nov. 29, p. 2315.

taken definite steps to influence local French press and radio accordingly.

3. Diem still presents our chief problem. My initial impression of his weaknesses has worsened rather than improved. It has been impossible to date to get him away from petty details of administration of army which has warped his views and absorbed bulk of his time and effort to exclusion of matters of far greater import. He has wavered back and forth on appointment of Quat as Minister Defense but has now made firm promise to appoint him. Actual appointment still awaits negotiations to find Cabinet post for Hinh [*Minh*] who refuses to remain as Deputy Minister Defense under anyone. No real progress toward stabilizing situation in armed forces and putting army to work of pacification can be made until Defense Minister is appointed with authority to act for the President. Diem promises action this week. We shall see.

4. Meanwhile, Diem, acting under instructions from Bao Dai which we feel certain were stimulated by Diem and brother Luyen, will announce 6 December appointment of General Nguyen Van Ty as army Chief of Staff and General Vy as Inspector General. I protested fact we were not consulted on these moves which we feel sure Diem knew would be contrary to recommendations of O'Daniel. O'Daniel feels Vy is far abler man than Ty. Latter has had practically no experience or training for higher military command. Diem still suspicious of Vy, who like Hinh has dual French–Vietnamese citizenship, and army commission. We fear Diem's action may harden opposition of army elements which had followed Hinh leadership. To cope with this we have urged Diem to announce his faith in army under new leadership and to promise no reprisals against Hinh adherents. He has promised to do so and we have seen draft proclamation scheduled for issue 6 December.

5. To facilitate projected MAAG training mission and make full use of such talents as Vy does possess we are trying to persuade Diem to broaden authority of Inspector General to include supervision of organization, training and operational side of army leaving to the Chief of Staff duties largely of administrative nature. Quat willing and anxious to do this but duties of Chief Staff and Inspector General are fixed by edict of Bao Dai who, as Chief of State and Commander in Chief, retains control of such military details, even though Diem supposedly has been given full civil and military powers to run the government. Diem may be persuaded to assign training responsibility to Vy but little else, and it will take bolder action from Diem to do even this than he has displayed so far. But we still have hopes.

6. The influence of Bao Dai is still effective in other fields and unless somehow reduced will continue to retard if not block progress. In

talking to Dr. Fishel, who is a valuable addition to my mission, Diem and brother Luyen say they are ready to assert increasing independence of Bao Dai but fear that US and French, who seem to regard Bao Dai as only legal source of authority in Vietnam, will not back up Diem if things come to a showdown. It would be well for State Department to give prompt consideration to this problem if policy not yet formulated.

7. Time may be approaching rapidly when some thought should be given also to possible alternatives to Diem. Next two weeks may tell whether we can really depend on him to take action in fields outlined in Embtel 2004. Progress is definitely possible in all these fields but Diem must delegate to his Ministers authority to negotiate directly with us. He promises to do this and we will proceed to test this out at once. He has taken no action as yet to appoint a Minister of Interior or new Minister of Information. It is true that he is under conflicting pressures from Bao Dai, the sects, the Binh Xuyen, and members of his own family, to say nothing of the French and Americans. His greatest strength, irritating as it is at times, is his stubborn tenacity which permitted him finally to defeat as formidable a foe as General Hinh. And he does have basic integrity and a certain spiritual quality which could be built into a valuable asset in combatting the phony but insidious religion of communism. There is no one in sight to take Diem's place at the moment, but time is running out, and it will take a lot of doing to make him into an effective leader.

8. *Postscript.* After above paragraphs were written following information has come to light. It is recounted in some detail to indicate conditions under which we and Diem government are operating here. Luyen arrived December 4 with decree appointing Ty Chief Staff and Vy Inspector General. Ty has agreed accept post but asked Diem not announce appointment until Bao Dai had decided what punishment if any should be meted out to a certain Lieutenant Colonel Houang who recently revolted against military superiors in favor of Diem Government. Luyen says he may have to go to Paris to see Bao Dai personally to get this affair settled. Situations such as this in which appeals, legitimate or otherwise, are made direct to Bao Dai in Paris are intolerable to effective government. It seems to me that two courses of action with respect to Bao Dai are possible: (1) He could return to Vietnam to take full charge of government or alternatively (2) he must be forced at once to relinquish his control over armed forces and made to delegate full authority to Diem to act without interference from Bao Dai, pending development of a constitutional monarchy. Since there appears to be general agreement that (1) for many reasons is undesirable, thought should be given promptly to means of implementing (2). I recognize that as long as

Bao Dai remains Chief of State he will serve as focal point for all non-Communist elements discontented with operations of government and accordingly must be handled with skill. I urge Department give prompt consideration to instructing Embassy Paris to discuss this problem with Bao Dai, making clear our point of view that long distance wire-pulling is no longer admissible under circumstances and must be eliminated.

9. *Conclusion.*

(A) It is still within realm of possibility that Diem may develop effective government capable of resisting Viet Minh encroachments and of holding the south, given stout US and French support and guarantees against external aggression by Manila Pact. However, there remain many hazards still to overcome, and prospects at this moment are only fair at best.

(B) There are some hopeful elements in situation: We have established satisfactory working relations with French and feel that at local level we are moving in same direction. Worst of National Army-Government feud is probably over and way is cleared for Diem to act if he will. Diem and brother Luyen have both said they feel optimistic for first time in many weeks.

(C) If we are to consider with French alternative to Diem, which both Department and Embassy have firmly resisted so far, delays and difficulties, possibly major in character, are inevitable. More time might well be lost in seeking candidate acceptable to Vietnamese, French, Bao Dai and ourselves than we can afford and in the end the search might prove fruitless. Nevertheless, we shall be forced to this expedient if Diem has not demonstrated by about January 1 that he is capable of governing.

KIDDER

120.251G/12–654: Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, December 6, 1954—7 p. m.

2111. Repeated information Paris 667, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. From Collins. Re Embtel 2110 repeated Paris 666.[1] Item (2) of agenda my talks with Ely December 3 was Education and Technical Training, subject proposed by him.

1. French wish to coordinate aid for all levels education and to maintain French language and culture so that Vietnam remains connecting link between East and West.

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[1] Telegram 2110 from Saigon, Dec. 6, summarizing the portion of the Collins-Ely discussion of Dec. 3 which dealt with economic and financial matters, is not printed. (851.05151G/12–654)

2. For higher education hope university under Vietnam control will not become narrowly nationalistic, but conserve international character, both in teachers and subject matters.

3. Greatest immediate need to train administrators, and French propose continue this activity through Ecole Nationale de Administration at Dalat. I raised objection to Dalat since too distant for in-service training of civil servants.

4. Basic idea to permit Vietnam to put its house in order, waste no time, money or energy, consolidate what exists, reform what is bad, and create those institutions which are needed.

5. I stated no intention on part of US to displace French or French language and culture nor to superimpose American culture or language, but pointed out that with independence Vietnam must inculcate spirit of independence, nationalism and patriotic devotion. Urged them not to suppress this spirit, for if Vietnamese get idea they aren't permitted to do things differently, French in for trouble.

6. I raised question proposed Michigan State College contract for institute and pointed out changes I had recommended. Ely expressed anxiety over plan, stating that Diem anti-French and desirous play off Americans against French. Made no pronouncement against project, but wishes have new proposals studied. I described Washington support and suggested it a mistake for French oppose too strongly.

7. I raised question Michigan State College police training program, but no objections from Ely. I stated normal USOM education program to continue and urged assistance be given youth groups.

8. Working committee to study all problems to permit coordinated effort.

KIDDER

751G.00/12-554 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Laos [1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, December 6, 1954—7:09 p. m.

132. Vientiane 158 repeated Saigon 227, Phnom Penh unnumbered.[2] Department concurs completely views expressed by you third paragraph reference telegram concerning reconsideration U.S. aid should Pathet Lao be permitted participate government.

After showing Vientiane telegram 163 to Lao Minister Washington,[3] opportunity taken reaffirm your views as noted above and solicit his assistance. He showed copy telegram he had sent twenty fourth November after talk with Dept officer in which he reported U.S. opinion as excluding support and aid to a coalition government including Pathet Lao.

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Repeated for information to Saigon as 2283; pouched to Paris and Phnom Penh.

[2] Dated Dec. 3, p. 2336.

[3] Telegram 163 from Vientiane, Dec. 5, containing the text of an ICC declaration regarding the situation in the two Pathet Lao controlled provinces of Laos, is not printed. (751G.00/12-55) Hoey's memorandum of his conversation of Dec. 6 with Ourot Souvannavong, the Minister of Laos, is also in file 751G.00/12-554.

In response his inquiry as to how he could help, suggestion made he communicate directly if possible to Crown Prince his own warning that first, no coexistence with Communists could end in anything but Communist victory, secondly people who assessed Pathet Lao as nationalist first and Communist second were simply naive and finally he again viewed U.S. policy as excluding aid to a Communist coalition government.

Lao Minister went on to express his low personal opinion of Katay. Latter achieved high position pre-war French civil service by accommodating self to French interests. Later did same with Japanese and Chinese. To make it worse, he is son of Vietnamese father. Although not necessarily pro-Communist he is impelled by opportunistic motives in dealing with Pathet Lao.

Minister thought combination Crown Prince, Phoui and U.S. views would ensure no soft policy adopted.

DULLES

751G.00/12–654

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Under Secretary of State (Murphy)

CONFIDENTIAL [WASHINGTON,] December 6, 1954.

Subject: Vietnam

Participants: Ambassador Tran Van Chuong, Embassy of Viet-Nam
Robert Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary

The Vietnamese Ambassador lunched with me today. He left with me the attached informal memorandum [1] which he said might interest us. He volunteered a number of remarks regarding the trend of affairs in Viet-Nam, the essence of which was that his country is now paying for French domination and mismanagement through the years. He said that in his opinion, regardless of gestures made by Paris and he thought a number of people in Paris are sympathetic and want to see justice done, the French elements who actually control the situation in Viet-Nam have not changed their ideas essentially. Those elements, he said, are seeking to prolong the same kind of a situation which has existed in Viet-Nam for many years under which French imperialism will continue. Inevitably in Asia, U.S. support of and association with the French policy exposed the U.S. to charges of imperialism and colonialism. They seek, he said, to set up a southern Viet-Nam governmental arrangement, using Cochin China as a base, which the French will continue to dominate and control. They hope, he stated, to work out a *modus vivendi* with Viet-Nam and in that he stated the conviction that the French will fail. If things continue as they are, he feels the Vietminh will inevitably control the entire area. He blames much of the inability of the Vietnamese to provide a competent governmental apparatus on French unwillingness in the past ever to permit men of stature to develop. He repeated the references made in the enclosed memorandum that while the French Government is apparently conceding economic power to the Vietnamese, it actually retains its control by its regulation of foreign exchange and the general economic life of the area. He, of course, emphasized the hope that the United States would deal directly with Viet-Nam in the field of economic assistance.

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[1] The memorandum does not accompany the source text.

On the economic independence of Viet Nam depend the economic equilibrium of Asia, the expansion of American influence in Indochina, and the salvaging or the loss of Viet Nam.

Up to the present the United States has aided France to aid and "defend" Viet Nam. The result is that Viet Nam depends closely on the French government and French authorities, who have always taken advantage of this to support only puppet governments and to sabotage any national government. From this situation, to cite only the most recent example, stems the rebellion of General Hinh, who, encouraged and supported by almost all the French in Indochina, paralysed the Vietnamese government for nearly three months at one of the most critical periods in its history. The task of the French Expeditionary Corps was to maintain order. Yet the arrival of General Collins was necessary to restore it. . . .[2]

The American government now admits the principle of direct aid to Viet Nam. But that direct aid will not suffice if it is given only for certain small precise projects and if the Vietnamese government is left closely dependent financially on the French Treasury.

The Vietnamese government will be held in that close dependence if the draft presented by the French delegation for a bilateral economic convention is not drastically modified.[3]

Article 1 of this project gives the Vietnamese government the power "to determine in full sovereignty the monetary regime of Viet Nam and the value of its monetary unit in relation to the franc," but this is only a theoretical power, for Article 2 gives the French government the power to grant or to refuse advances from the French Treasury to the Bank of Issue of Viet Nam, destined to procure the necessary foreign exchange for that Bank of Issue. The French government thus concedes a theoretical power to the Vietnamese government but actually keeps the full power of regulating the foreign exchange and the economic life of Viet Nam.

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[2] Omission indicated in the source text.

[3] Reference is to negotiations under way in Paris since August between France and each of the Associated States with the purpose of redefining economic and financial relationships.

That bilateral convention will be concluded only for a year, but the history of the past eighty years has shown that the French authorities have always profited from what they call a temporary dependence of the Vietnamese government to enlarge and prolong it indefinitely instead of progressively diminishing it.

In these circumstances, why not replace the advances from the French Treasury to the Bank of Issue of Viet Nam by advances from the American Treasury, since in reality both come from the same American source.

Why prolong French commitments in Viet Nam when the history of these last eight years has proved that they are a cause of disaster for Viet Nam and of weakness for France and the Free World.

Why continue to bind the Vietnamese economy to the French economy and Vietnamese finances to French finances, when for its own sake and that of Asia Viet Nam must be allowed to find its natural place in Asia,—(Japan will be asphyxiated if she is not permitted to buy and sell freely in what remains free of Asia)—when the Vietnamese people no more need French wines and perfumes than the French people need Vietnamese rice, when the moral, political, and economic life of Viet Nam is completely warped by the presence and expenditures of the French Expeditionary Corps. This presence and these expenditures are possible, moreover, only because of American dollars.

The time has come to get out of those ruts of the past which have become progressively deeper and can only lead to a rapid and final engulfment.

Viet Nam must be saved and can only be saved by itself and the United States. All the difficulties and the defeats suffered in Viet Nam stem from the fact that America tried to let someone else carry out a task which she alone could accomplish.

Furthermore, she does not need to fight. She needs only to give aid. The intermediary in this case has served only to confuse and spoil everything. That intermediary is not the French people, themselves only victims in this sad affair; it is a matter of only a few thousand colonialists, who must not be confused with France.

790.5/12-754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

SECRET WASHINGTON, December 7, 1954—3:50 p. m.

1456. Joint State/FOA message. Consideration being given desirability particularly from political standpoint strengthening relations Cambodia and Laos with Thailand. Objective would be give national governments Cambodia and Laos increased support of neighboring state with similar ethnic origins, social institutions and long history independence.

Believe this objective might be reached through aid projects specially chosen for purpose. Glad to note proposed FOA programs defense support include some of following type projects which should be designed attain objective stated: improvement trade channels and communications among the three states such as bridge over Mekong at Vientiane, improvement of railroad Phnom Penh–Bangkok, improvement of east-west lines of communication, irrigation Thailand Northeast provinces, etc. Department aware projects must be chosen in such manner not to give impression of split-up of Associated States, but believes careful selection of projects could straighten [*strengthen*] individual and joint stand of Associated States.

Without discussions with local government request your general reaction to above as well as list of projects that might be undertaken as contributing to above aim. Comment on desirability and feasibility from economic and technical standpoint also desired as well as your estimate whether services topflight U.S. engineering firms would be desirable at early date to develop details and firm figures such projects.

In light need avoid weakening useful links already established by past associations also desire suggestions aid projects to strengthen ties three countries with free Viet-Nam.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Tyson and Catlett of PSA. Also sent to Saigon as 2295, to Phnom Penh as 181, and to Vientiane as 133.

751G.00/12-754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PARIS, December 7, 1954—8 p. m.

2417. Rptd info Saigon 349. Limit distribution in Department. Saigon for Collins. Re Saigon tel 2108 rptd info Paris 665.[1] I am gratified to read Collins report that Saigon is enjoying satisfactory working relations with French and "we are now moving in same direction" there. It is in the thought that nothing should be done to disturb these relations or give French reason to claim that we are not adhering to Washington agreement that I think it would be mistake to approach Bao Dai unilaterally along lines paragraph 8 reftel until French have been consulted and permitted to express their views. As they have agreed to designate full authority in these matters to Ely it appears to me that such consultation should more appropriately take place between Collins and Ely in Saigon rather than in Paris.

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[1] Dated Dec. 6, p. 2341.

Moreover, I question whether we should approach Bao Dai in an effort to persuade him to relinquish his control over the Vietnamese armed forces so soon after we have successfully prevailed upon him to exercise that same control in summoning General Hinh to Paris and neutralizing him. We have found as general rule that it is more effective approach Bao Dai with specific request, as we did in Hinh case, rather than in generalities.

Similarly, I question whether it would be wise to attempt to remove Bao Dai's authority and transfer his powers to Diem or anyone else until such time as there is specific plan for new form government, constitutional monarchy or otherwise. Mendes has recently confirmed policy of Foreign Office and Ministry Associated States that "thread of legality" which Bao Dai still represents is useful asset which we can ill afford to dissipate until another can be substituted. Recent action in Hinh case proved how useful an instrument Bao Dai's authority can be to serve our purposes when required. I therefore suggest that Collins may wish to discuss Bao Dai *démarche* with Ely before Department formulates its instructions in matter.

DILLON

751G.00/12–754

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Young)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] December 7, 1954.

Subject: Vietnam and Southeast Asia

Participants: Senator Mike Mansfield
Assistant Secretary Walter S. Robertson
Assistant Secretary Thruston B. Morton
Mr. Kenneth T. Young, Jr.

At the Secretary's request Mr. Robertson, Mr. Morton and Mr. Young went to see Senator Mansfield this morning with respect to General Collins' analysis of the situation in Vietnam (Saigon's 2108 of December 6). Mr. Robertson explained to Senator Mansfield that the Secretary had a summary of this telegram early this morning and had asked that it be brought to Senator Mansfield's attention so that the State Department might have the benefit of his reaction and advice.

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[1] On Dec. 8, Assistant Secretary Robertson transmitted a copy of this record to the Secretary of State, accompanied by a memorandum summarizing the main points made by Senator Mansfield. (751G.00/12–854) The views of the Senator were sent to Saigon in telegram 2333 of Dec. 8. (120.251G/12–654)

After reading the telegram and discussing various points Senator Mansfield stated his conclusions as follows:

1. The prospects for helping Diem strengthen and uphold South Vietnam look very dim given the best of circumstances. Any elections in 1956 will probably favor the Communists.
2. Nevertheless, the United States should continue to exert its efforts and use its resources, even if it will cost a lot, to hold Vietnam as long as possible. Any other course would have a disastrous effect on Cambodia, Laos and Southeast Asia. The Senator strongly opposed the idea of abandoning our effort in Vietnam. That course of action would lead to the absorption of Cambodia and Laos by the Communists.
3. Therefore, he felt we should continue to do whatever was possible to support the government of Diem. Senator Mansfield sees no alternative Prime Minister. While recognizing Diem's weaknesses as an administrator and manager, Senator Mansfield feels we ought to continue to back Diem, strongly encourage him to make Dr. Quat Minister of Defense immediately, and urge Diem to delegate as much as possible of the day-to-day operations of the government to others. Senator Mansfield was of the opinion that General Collins' time limit of two to three weeks was playing with "political dynamite" because it was giving Diem such an awfully short time in which to show results or be replaced.
4. With respect to Mr. Robertson's point that the French would subject the Secretary to great pressure on immediately finding a replacement for Diem, Senator Mansfield took the strong position that this line of action would only confound the already great difficulties in Vietnam. It would add much confusion, take time, and probably increase the divisions within Vietnam beyond what they are today. Senator Mansfield was certain the refugees and many of the Catholic bishops and church officials would oppose the replacement of Diem. The Senator felt that Diem represented what small hope there may be in building something in Vietnam. He was against relinquishing even the small chance we have with Diem for some unknown and untried combination.
5. Senator Mansfield agreed with General Collins' recommendation that Embassy Paris urge Bao Dai to cease the long distance wire-pulling from the Riviera and to give Diem complete backing and initiative to run the government without interference from Bao Dai. Senator Mansfield strongly urged that it was so important to get this idea across to Bao Dai that Ambassador Dillon himself should make the approach assuming the publicity of such a meeting could be kept to a minimum. The Senator also felt very strongly that Bao Dai should not return to Vietnam.
6. In addition to the above, Senator Mansfield said that Dr. Quat in his opinion was an able man who could do much to help bring the army under control and into loyal support of the government. He hoped Diem would appoint Quat right away. The Senator said that

the remarkable aspect of Diem was unlike most of the Vietnamese, he really was honest, incorruptible and a devoutly dedicated nationalist as well. However, the Senator expressed the personal view that in politics one often has to make some compromises in order to get results. He thought that Diem should be encouraged not only to delegate responsibilities to trusted and capable ministers, but should also give in to a certain amount of compromise. The Senator suggested that Dr. Fishel would probably be the best person to work out with Diem the problem of delegation and political adjustments. It was clear that the Senator had great confidence in Dr. Fishel. He hoped that the Department and the Embassy would give the latter full leeway and since he appears to have the complete confidence of Diem. On Mr. Robertson's point that the French and the British would continue to push very hard for Tam, Senator Mansfield was firmly opposed to our accepting Tam or exerting any pressure at all on Diem to include Tam in his cabinet. Senator Mansfield agreed with Mr. Robertson that to do so would compromise the cabinet and provide the Communists with a ready made argument for charging the Diem government with being a puppet of the old colonial regime.

751G.00/12–854 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State[1]

SECRET

SAIGON, December 8, 1954—9 p. m.
[Received December 9—9 : 44 a. m.]

2165. Repeated information Paris 678, Hanoi 427. From Collins. At Ely's invitation I met with him and Jean Sainteny eighth. Résumé of conversation, which consisted principally of questions asked by me and answers given by Sainteny, as follows:

1. Initial reaction of lower classes to advent of Viet Minh in general favorable, but attitude appears be shifting now to one of uneasiness. Middle classes have tried from beginning remain unobtrusive as possible.

2. Attitude of local population to French, at first reticent, now appears to be warming. Vietnamese servants who remained with French at beginning were shunned by other Vietnamese. Attitude of latter toward servants of French now seems be changing to envy owing to better living conditions of such employees.

3. Economic conditions of Viet Minh zone are not good and unemployment constitutes major problem for regime. Moral pressures have been brought to reduce wages and prices "voluntarily and by unanimous consent". No machinery has been set up however to handle controls.

4. There is no evidence of Chinese or Russian technicians in Hanoi, although there may be Chinese advisers in Thai Nguyen. Viet Minh

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

Government accordingly is making show of independence of Communist mentors, contrary to their practice of eight or ten years ago as observed by Sainteny.

5. Most French technicians who remained Hanoi for two months after city passed to Viet Minh have now departed. Three are still with tramways and one each with water and electric plants; all will have left by end of month. Sainteny said with emphasis they had not been replaced by Chinese, Russian, Polish, or Czech technicians.

6. Method of extending Communist rule in Hanoi different from that employed in provinces. In Hanoi, at least at government level, there is considerable flexibility, while in provinces methods have been rigid and directed to reach roots of society.

7. In reply to specific question, Sainteny said as long as six weeks ago he had begun prepare Viet Minh officials (Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Commerce and Industry) for removal of American aid financed equipment from Charbonnages du Tonkin. Answering question why it was necessary gain Viet Minh consent for removal such privately owned materials, Sainteny said there was no question of gaining consent but rather of preparing way so that Viet Minh would not block removal of equipment by fomenting disorders, as they could do at any time if they wished. I urged removal be got under way soon as possible. Ely intervened to say one steam shovel has been disassembled and that he has assigned one regiment to stay with task of equipment removal until completed.

8. Asked to define his mission in north, Sainteny said he was charged with maintaining French cultural and economic interests. I said that Viet Minh zone is deficit area and economy can be sustained only by means of outside help. Such help can come only from China, Russia or France. Is it French intent make aid available to Viet Minh regime? Sainteny said press had misrepresented his views this matter. On other hand, Viet Minh could be rendered more dangerous and induced undertake action against south if cruelly pinched economically.

9. Continuing in this vein, Sainteny said objective for 1956 must be to have free, secret elections in which people living in Viet Minh zone can show their displeasure with regime by voting against it. Therefore it is mistake encourage northerners leave Viet Minh zone as refugees; persons who leave are precisely those who would be most inclined vote against Viet Minh. I asked Sainteny what precedent there was for free elections under Communist regime. He admitted he knew of none.

10. With further reference his mission, Sainteny said by maintaining presence in north, France is conducting experiment in "co-habitation or co-existence", at little cost and with little risk, which may be value to all western nations. Chinese and Russians seem be pushing

Viet Minh to be conciliatory with French and Viet Minh have assured Sainteny that French business and industry will be welcome on equal terms with Viet Minh firms and will be allowed transfer their net profits. Sainteny sees here possible model for eventual operation of western capitalist firms in other Communist countries. I asked Sainteny if policy he was attempting develop in north would be extended to all Vietnam when and if Communists succeed in taking over. He protested his experiment was general in character and not intended for specific application elsewhere should it work out in Tonkin. Ely intervened this point to remark interpretation Sainteny set on his mission was his own and did not represent policy of French Government.

11. When Sainteny had left room, Ely said Sainteny had apparently not created good impression on me. He went on to say that when he knew Sainteny had been assigned Tonkin he, Ely, very nearly decided against returning Vietnam. Thereafter Sainteny's mission was more precisely defined and his present terms of reference are very narrow.

12. Conclusion. Sainteny creates in fact very equivocal impression. He is distinguished in appearance and handles himself in such manner as to suggest he may have first-class intelligence. However most of his reasoning was so fuzzy in character that I can only conclude he has misled himself, or was attempting to mislead me, with respect to the nature and prospects of his mission in North Vietnam.[2]

KIDDER

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[2] In telegram 2179 of Dec. 9, Collins added the following:

"Ely reverted to subject of Sainteny interview evening 8th, saying latter had put on poor show. Normally Sainteny gives better account of himself, Ely said, and could have made better case if he had represented his mission as being one of series of attempts to avoid major war and had pointed out that lessons learned in course of experiment might prove to be variable tool in treating with Communists elsewhere, to end that cold war not evolve into active hostilities.

"It seems clear that Ely fears impression I may have gained of and from Sainteny might compromise our working relations, in sense that interview may have led me to wonder whether Ely does in fact represent all of French policy re Indochina and whether commitments he gives will be fully underwritten by French Government." (751G.00/12–954)

120.251G/12–854 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, December 8, 1954—8 p. m.
[Received December 9—9:44 a. m.]

2167. Repeated information Paris 680, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. From Collins. Re Embtel 2004, repeated Paris 643.[1]

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[1] Dated Nov. 29, p. 2315.

1. Fifth and last of series of meetings with Ely on major programs cited in reference telegram held 6 December. Subject of discussion: Information, propaganda, and various measures to strengthen Diem Government. French outlined current propaganda techniques being used by Viet Minh and suggested general lines of program that should be followed by Vietnamese, French and US propaganda effort:

a. Vietnam propaganda activities should be united and not fragmented as they now are among sects, army, and special interest groups.
b. French and US assistance to Vietnamese propaganda effort should be mainly in form of financial support and French and Americans should remain in background. Thorough coordination among efforts of three parties essential.
c. Propaganda should be tailored to specific target areas, not uniform for all Vietnam.
d. Effective theme in north would be denouncing Viet Minh regime by showing divergence between promises and reality; significance of refugee exodus; conscription of forced labor; unemployment; heavy taxation. Clandestine propaganda workers would be effective if directed by secret service under experienced Vietnamese. Certain existing groups and networks in north could play helpful role.
e. In south effective propaganda can derive only from positive accomplishments of government in such fields as raising living standards and effecting land reforms. Government must promptly organize effective administrative machinery down to village level, play up spectacular examples of its achievements, and present self as protector of people. Example cited of Magsaysay's flair for dramatizing his role as friend of common man.

2. I stated that basically we were in accord on kind of program that needed to be carried out, but that key problem was how to get it started. Present Minister of Information, Thai, is Cao Daist whose first loyalty is to his sect, not National Government, and Diem is reluctant replace him for fear of alienating Cao Daists. Immediate problem is to get effective Minister of Information who can start program and with whom French and US can work. Also necessary to get army out of political propaganda field and bring all government activities under Ministry. Ely then provided brief list of possible candidates for post of Minister which I turned over to PAO for study. I volunteered to speak to Diem about appointing person who we would agree had promise.

3. In connection with discussion of basic appeals effective with Vietnamese, I stressed importance, in my judgment, of constant repetition by the French of the fact that Vietnam had been granted independence. I cited fact that Magsaysay did not know when or if French had granted Vietnam independence. Viet Minh are able to achieve major psychological advantage by charging that Vietnam is not free but that it remains under French domination as indicated by Magsaysay.

4. Discussion served as useful exchange of views and resulted in general agreement on desirable lines of proceeding in public information and propaganda field. It was recognized no substantial progress can be made until government organizes an effective Ministry of Information and makes some tangible achievements in social and economic fields which its propaganda can exploit.

KIDDER

120.251G/12–254 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 9, 1954—11:49 a. m.

2351. Limit distribution. Saigon 2051 repeated Paris 658.[2] Department wishes take this opportunity comment on general line your political program as reported 2051 and 1935,[3] 2004,[4] 2031,[5] 2039.[6]

1) Close working relations on six-point program with General Ely and his staff should help materially deal with difficult problems faced Viet-Nam. Department concurs your general policy as outlined Saigon 2004.

2) With respect fifth point Saigon 2004 we have following comment:

Suggestions for National Assembly which you and Ely agreed to refer to a small joint working group responsible for preparing proposal alternative to that submitted to Cabinet (Saigon 2022),[7] appears to us to differ in some important and fundamental respects from latter. Under Minister of Reform proposal, Assembly would be responsible for preparing within three months provisional charter to be applicable until definitive constitution adopted by elected Assembly. Under suggestions submitted by you and Ely, (Saigon 2039) Assembly would "not have constitutional drafting powers". Under Minister Reforms proposal, Assembly agreement would have to be sought on all budget proposals and Assembly would have right interpellation with respect all domestic or foreign political questions, whereas under your suggestions Assembly powers would appear far more limited and circumscribed. Department recalls there still exists in Saigon meaningless

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[1] Drafted by Young and Hoey of PSA. Repeated for information to Phnom Penh and Paris via pouch.

[2] In telegram 2051 from Saigon, Dec. 2, not printed, General Collins requested guidance on the question of projected 1956 elections in Vietnam. (120.251G/12–254)

[3] Dated Nov. 23, p. 2279.

[4] Dated Nov. 29, p. 2315.

[5] Dated Dec. 1, p. 2325.

[6] Telegram 2039 from Saigon, Dec. 1, not printed, summarized a meeting between General Collins and General Ely during which problems of the establishment of a Vietnamese National Assembly were discussed. (751G.2/12–15)

[7] Telegram 2022 from Saigon, Nov. 30, describing a Vietnamese draft plan for a provisional national assembly, is not printed. (751G.2/11–3054)

"Provisional National Council" introduced with great fanfare during Tam regime, and is concerned that under suggestions which have strong French flavor another such useless body might again eventuate and again be rejected by Vietnamese as a whole as completely inadequate their needs for democratic government. While in full accord that we should urge speedy creation responsive and responsible National Assembly, we feel substantive details should be left largely to Vietnamese themselves to solve if their independence is to have real meaning, and U.S. prestige remain unimpaired.

3) We emphasize Secretary's remarks paragraph 1C our 2112 [8] which expressed our view joint U.S.-French action in all cases was not conceded by U.S. We do not wish Diem and Vietnamese think U.S. and French ganging up on Diem. Much initiative must come from Diem. Department concerned lest Vietnamese get impression Americans and French planning their future for them in great detail. Therefore Department desires suggestions on internal matters such as specific ministers and reforms be conveyed individually as much as possible though not necessarily always. This must be left discretion you and country team.

4) Regarding elections as raised your 1841 [9] and 2051: Our 2113 [10] to Saigon reported only discussion this subject during Mendes visit and was raised outside plenary meetings. Our 2112 paragraph three while not specifically referring elections reported U.S. and French views regarding relations with Viet Minh. We did not desire during Mendes visit to go into this subject any further than necessary to learn French policy. Mendes reply was inconclusive and we reserved our views. We continue believe discussions with French or Vietnamese this subject should be avoided for time being until trend of security development in Free Viet-Nam is more clearly defined. If raised by Ely, confine response to absence instructions this point. We are continuing study how and when make fundamental approach to French this matter.

DULLES

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[8] Dated Nov. 24, p. 2303.
[9] Dated Nov. 16, p. 2256.
[10] For text, see footnote 2, p. 2305.

751J.5/12-1054 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET

VIENTIANE, December 10, 1954—8 p. m.

174. Repeated information Saigon 250, Paris, Phnom Penh, Bangkok unnumbered. Current review proposed Lao military budget and forces basis makes appropriate reassessment position Laos from viewpoints Southeast Asian security and US interest.

We wish avoid competition among SEA states for largest possible slice US aid and invidious comparisons as to which is most important, most defensible, or most likely to succumb to subversion. Each is important, each is likely to succumb to subversion if unaided, and each should be supported by US to full extent feasible under circumstances. On other hand, requirements of each should be examined realistically in relation to (*a*) its capacity to utilize aid, (*b*) immediacy and proximity of threat, and (*c*) strategic importance to defense of its free neighbors. Furthermore, we cannot subscribe to theory that, if one state falls to Communists, others must inevitably follow. If free world reacts in healthy fashion to Communist successes, as it has in Europe, loss or threatened loss of any single southeast Asian country should reinforce determination and efforts to buttress its immediate neighbors.

With the second consideration in mind, we invite particular attention to following factors regarding Laos:

(1) Laos, like Vietnam and Burma, is directly adjacent to Communist area and hence most exposed to infiltration. Like Vietnam, it was subjected by Geneva accords to contractual disabilities which give Communists privileged position within country. Its security would be further jeopardized by any new unfavorable developments in neighboring Vietnam. Threat is therefore immediate and proximate.

(2) Fall of Laos would have most serious effect on security of free neighbors, particularly Thailand and Cambodia, which would thereby acquire extensive common frontier with Communist bloc. Vis-à-vis both armed invasion and infiltration, mountainous jungle area separating Laos from Viet Minh and Chinese presents far less penetrable frontier than would Mekong. Laos therefore of prime importance to strategic defense Southeast Asia as whole.

(3) Because of small population, primitive economy and dearth trained civil servants and military officers, Laos does not require and could not absorb massive aid. Pending completion fuller examination now under way, we consider that for calendar 1955 40–50 million dollars should be earmarked for military support, in expectation Lao armed forces might during year be reduced moderately and gradually, and that for same period 12–15 million dollars should be earmarked for economic aid, in expectation expenditures for this purpose will increase during second half calendar year. Assuming French and other foreign aid to Laos will not be substantial, except in providing military and civilian advisors, US aid in approximately these magnitudes will be essential to maintain and gradually to reinforce security and stability.

(4) Potential threat to Laos is four-fold: (*a*) Armed invasion, (*b*) renewed military action Pathet Lao with clandestine Viet and Chinese support, (*c*) legal and illegal political action Pathet Lao under Viet direction, (*d*) internal political and administrative difficulties arising from quarrels among non-Communist leaders and too hasty expulsion French advisers.

We consider these threats can be successfully met if, primarily, US and, secondarily, France and Laos immediate neighbors, particularly

Thailand and Cambodia, provide necessary support. As to point (*a*), no amount of aid could enable Laos to resist large-scale invasion and reliance must in this regard be placed on Manila Pact and Communist fear of provoking general war. At least for near future, we consider no invasion likely to occur. As to point (*b*), if Pathet should renew hostilities we believe presently constituted Lao armed forces, US financed and French trained, could at least contain within two northern provinces, and at best eliminate, Pathets, if latter not substantially reinforced by Viets. If Viets reinforce, violation of Geneva Accords would demand attention both Geneva signatories and Manila Pact members. As to point (*c*), economic, propaganda and security activities projected by Lao Government should, if necessary US and French aid forthcoming rapidly and Lao authorities can be stimulated to act with vigor, suffice to counter Pathet–Viet political action. Prompt staffing, elaboration and implementation FOA and USIS programs essential to bring aid to bear and to stimulate Laotians. Thailand and Cambodian collaboration would be most helpful in these fields. As to point (*d*), while latent dangers exist, we believe authority of Crown Prince and Conservative leaders, supported from time to time by discreet but firm exercise US and French influence, should be adequate to hold dangers within bounds

On basis this analysis and without indulging in complacency, we believe there is reasonable prospect meeting four-fold threat if each constituent element our side, Laos, US, France, Laos neighbors, energetically does its part. Situation in this area still fluid but freezing point is approaching and in whatever form it freezes it is likely to remain for some time. Laos is basically inhospitable to Communism and to Chinese-Annamite influence and spiritually attached to its Buddhist neighbors and western friends. It can, weak as it is, be made into buffer between those neighbors and Communism. The first prerequisite, however, as so often elsewhere, is prompt, firm and adequate US support.[1]

Yost

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[1] Despatch 40 from Vientiane, Dec. 11, provided detailed recommendations for a U.S. program in Laos. (611.51J/12–1154) The Legation also submitted an assessment of the political situation in the country in despatch 42 of Dec. 14. (751J.02/12–1454)

751G.00/12–1154 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET

Saigon, December 11, 1954—7 p. m.

2205. Repeated information Paris 693. Limit distribution. From Collins. Re Paris telegram 2417 to Department.[1]

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[1] Dated Dec. 7, p. 2349.

1. While wording of paragraph 8 Embassy telegram 2108,[2] may have simple unilateral approach to Bao Dai, it was not my intent that step of this importance should be taken without my discussing it with Ely. I agree to principle of frank and full exchange with French, but recall in this connection Secretary's reservation, in recent conversation with Mendes-France, of our right to consult unilaterally with Vietnamese. I have informed Ely of this reservation, adding that I would keep him generally informed regarding all matters of mutual interest. I hope the French will keep us similarly informed of their moves and believe Ely, for his part, will do so.

2. As long as Bao Dai remains Chief of State I agree there may be no option, but that he continue as Commander-in-Chief with power to intervene in such cases as Diem–Hinh dispute which possibly could have led to forcible overthrow of government. What I consider intolerable, however, is that he should entertain and adjudicate appeals regarding what should be routine administrative matters. As long as it is known or believed Bao Dai is available to arbitrate any disagreement between head of government and latter's nominal subordinates, way is open for repeated violations of discipline and good order. I believe, therefore, we should consider means of conveying this idea to Bao Dai. His cooperation in Hinh affair I take to be encouraging augury for future in this respect, although I realize Bao Dai and especially his entourage will be reluctant foreswear technique of government by remote control which they have long since adapted to their own purposes and interests.

3. I do not propose we "attempt to remove Bao Dai's authority" but that we urge him to delegate, as matter of course, all his authority to head of government, retaining only ultimate authority (until constitutional provision is made for other procedures) to appoint head of government.

4. If Department agrees with this line of reasoning, and so indicates, I will be glad to discuss it with Ely.

KIDDER

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[2] Dated Dec. 6, p. 2341.

751G.00/12–1354 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, December 13, 1954—6 p. m.

2244. Repeated Paris 704, Phnom Penh, Vientiane unnumbered. From Collins. Below summary of two recent conversations concerning Quat appointment, Diem and Bao Dai:

1. (A) On 10 December Quat informed me that Diem had told him that he would take him in the government if Quat could persuade Cao Dai and Hoa Hao to agree. Quat told Diem he did not think problem serious, would do whatever he could to allay sects fear of him but would not engage in any electioneering before hand. Quat suggested that it might be helpful if junior American official informed Phuong, Cao Dai Pope (Pham Cong Tac) and Soai that Quat appointment would be in national interest and they should not fear appointment of Quat as Defense Minister. Quat also said that Soai is responsive to French pressure so I intend to bring this subject up with Ely. Quat further stated that he had seen Prime Minister 15 times with respect entering cabinet but did not intend to see him again in this connection. He remains available to serve country but felt continued consultation this subject would only be harmful to both men. Quat is convinced Diem does not want him in cabinet and is using pretexts to avoid naming him.

(B) Quat felt future policy of Vietnam next few years would be divided into two stages. In immediate future national policy must be based on the fact that a large expeditionary corps is based Vietnam, colonial administration remains in place and Geneva accords are in process of implementation. The second phase would follow this period and policy would be similar to that followed by Philippines and Republic of Korea. He feels that Diem wants to vault over the first phase and enter at once into the second. Quat, on the other hand, says that he would favor a flexible policy during first phase adaptable to circumstances.

(C) Quat then asked me if American aid would only be given to Diem Government. I replied that if the Government of Vietnam is legally changed there is no reason to deduce from that fact that American aid would be suspended. I further told him that I had been sent to Vietnam to support the legal Government of the country and that Vietnam occupies so strategic a position in Southeast Asia that we could not contemplate its loss without greatest misgivings.

(D) Quat then stated he felt Bao Dai was necessary instrument and should be used either in France or Vietnam. If he remains in France he must be kept completely informed; if he returns here he should give the Prime Minister a free hand. Quat feels Bao Dai is gradually orienting himself toward the US and American influence over Bao Dai is increasing.

2. (A) On 11 December Le Huu Tu, former Bishop Phat Diem in Tonkin called. He said when Diem took over office there was wave of hope throughout country but that this had been dissipated by at least 50 percent and that there is increasing widespread dissatisfaction with Diem. Tu said Diem is honest patriot but indecisive and surrounded

by bad advisers, most of whom are members of his family. Tu felt, however, there was no one to take his place at present and that he must be encouraged to take action and improve administration. Tu further stated that Diem is authoritarian in spirit and when threatened by rise of capable individual he seeks others to play off against potential rival.

(B) Bishop said Quat would make good Defense Minister but feels he lacks popular support to become Prime Minister.

(C) Tu stated that Bao Dai must be kept as a figurehead and symbol of national unity but that he should remain in France. Bishop believes that brother Nhu is eager to dispose of Bao Dai and advised Diem accordingly.

[KIDDER]

751G.00/12–1354 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State[1]

TOP SECRET NIACT SAIGON, December 13, 1954—7 p. m.

2250. Repeated information Paris 706, Phnom Penh, Vientiane unnumbered. Limited distribution. From Collins. Re Deptels 2305 repeated Paris 2094 and 2378 repeated Paris unnumbered December 10.[2] This message in two parts.

Part I.

Recent developments current situation follow:

1. Relations with French:

(A) Earlier this week Ely was on verge of signing minute of understanding on organization and training of Vietnamese armed forces. Now French have come up with new amendments requiring US respect Ely's responsibilities "under Geneva accords" and including long new "protocol" with several references to Geneva. Whether these new proposals come from Ely's legal staff or Paris I do not know, but inclined believe latter since Ely agreed to resolve few remaining minor points directly with me and since he has said several times that Paris political circles would have to be satisfied. I intend refuse accept any reference to Geneva accord or make any further concessions reference O'Daniel's full responsibility for training under Ely's broad direction.[3]

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in three parts.

[2] In telegrams 2305 and 2378 to Saigon, Dec. 7 and Dec. 10, respectively, the Department of State requested the current views of General Collins on the situation in Vietnam. This information was required by Secretary Dulles who was leaving for Paris on Dec. 14 for a meeting of the North Atlantic Council. It was anticipated that while in Paris, the Secretary would discuss the question of Indochina with Premier Mendès-France and Foreign Secretary Eden. (751G.00/12–754; 751G.00/12–854)

[3] For text of the agreement signed by Collins and Ely on Dec. 13, see telegram 2261 from Saigon, Dec. 14, *infra*.

(B) Interview with Sainteny, to which Ely and his officers continue to refer with chagrin, appears reinforce view that our relations with French in Indochina may remain less clear-cut than Ely wishes and has given me to believe they are.

2. Latest developments re Quat:

(A) Since Luyen's return from Paris, his open opposition to Quat has undermined Diem's decision to appoint Quat Minister of Defense. On 11 December Diem informed Fishel as follows: six of seven cabinet members consulted by Diem have voiced strong opposition to Quat. Generals Phuong (Cao Dai) and Soai (Hoa Hao) have declared they will withdraw from government and threaten open rebellion if Quat appointed. Because of location Hoa Hao territory, Diem purports to fear General Soai might cut off rice supply of Saigon–Cholon, block road and waterway traffic through coastal areas and to Saigon, make war in Hoa Hao areas against national army which in present condition could not handle situation. Diem fears also comparable action might be taken by Cao Dai forces, including possible moves against government in Saigon and vicinity.

(B) Diem told Fishel that he had informed Phuong and Soai that Americans wanted Quat as Defense Minister. The Generals replied, "a responsible American should speak for the Americans". Hence Diem asked Fishel to transmit these "facts" to me, saying if I or "some other person" can convince Phuong and Soai not oppose actively the appointment, Diem will appoint Quat at once. (A neat passing of the buck, we must admit.) If sect leaders persist in their opposition, Diem says he would be inclined raise present Deputy Minh to Defense Minister and give him full authority and responsibility over armed forces.

(C) I am quite convinced that Diem and brothers Luyen and Nhu are afraid to turn over control of armed forces to Quat or any other strong man. They may also fear Quat as potential successor to Diem and hence are doing everything they can to keep him out of any post in government. With General Hinh fired and General Vy replaced as Chief of Staff by spineless General Ty, Diem has fairly effectively seized control of army. I doubt Diem would delegate real authority to Minh, but would retain meddling hand on details to detriment O'Daniel's training mission and effective development of armed forces.

(D) Through Colonel Lansdale's group and CAS, I am canvassing attitude of sect leaders and genuineness of their alleged threats. Depending on Lansdale's findings, I will consider (1) proposing to Ely a direct US-French approach to General Soai, who Quat has said will bow to French pressure; (2) having Lansdale suggest to Soai that with Quat in defense all rice for armed forces would be purchased from Hoa Hao (this was hint dropped some time ago by Quat as means of buying off Hoa Hao); (3) sending emissaries to Soai, Phuong and Cao Dai Pope (Pham Cong Tac) making clear that any rebellion would lead to withdrawal all American aid and inevitable victory for Ho Chi Minh who would certainly not tolerate private empires of Hoa Hao or Cao Dai.

(E) I realize disadvantages of forcing Diem to accept "American choice" of Quat. However acceptance of *status quo*, with Minh elevated to Defense Ministry and sects reinforced in veto power over government, is simply postponing evil day of reckoning as to when, if ever, Diem will assert type of leadership that can unify this country and give it chance of competing with hard, effective, unified control of Ho Chi Minh. Such a delaying action would appear to be justified only if we are preparing way for alternatives, as indicated in part II.

3. Resolution of Phan Rang-Phan Thiet affair:

Compromise solution in matter of rebellious officers has been found and is apparently satisfactory to army command and Prime Minister.

4. Army Chief of Staff and Inspector General:

At midnight 12–13 December Generals Vy and Ty took office as Inspector General and Chief of Staff Vietnam armed forces, respectively. Details of Vy's duties not yet known.

5. Diem's declaration of confidence in Army:

December 13 Diem published declaration expressing confidence in Army and calling on all ranks to join with people in building free, independent Vietnam.

Postscript.

6. Re paragraph 1 (A) above: Ely and I this morning signed minute of understanding on development and training of autonomous Vietnam armed forces and agreed to wording of separate explanatory memorandum for record to accompany it. Final text of minute is based on our draft and I consider it wholly satisfactory. Texts follow by separate message.

7. Re paragraph 2 above: Ely and I agreed this morning to take further steps to secure Quat's appointment. Ely discounts possibility sects will revolt if such appointment made. Ely said he would at once see Generals Phuong and Soai and inform them both French and Americans support Quat's appointment. Ely said he has little influence over Cao Dai Pope and recommended I see him. Ely will also intervene with Deputy Defense Minister Minh and ask him to remain three to six months as Quat's deputy.

Part II.

Possible alternatives to Diem Government:

1. As I see it, we have 3 possible courses of action in Vietnam:

(*a*) Continue support of Diem Government.

(*b*) Support establishment of another government which may be able to save situation.

(*c*) Gradually withdraw support from Vietnam.

2. (A) Difficulties and risk of support Diem have been covered in Embtel 2108[4] and part I this message and other cables. Recent accomplishments have been minor considering magnitude of task ahead. Favorable developments include:

(1) Diem made first anti-Communist appeal to people 16 November.
(2) Diem–Hinh feud has been resolved, for present at least.
(3) Diem made trip to South Cochin China to observe work by Army in its rehabilitation program.
(4) Phan Rang–Phan Thiet affair has been compromised.
(5) Vy and Ty have taken their new offices.
(6) 13 December Diem issued proclamation expressing confidence in the Army and calling on it to unite with people in the fight against Communism.

(B) Realize abandonment of Diem would embarrass US in view our public support present government. However, if it proves necessary, believe such embarrassment would prove insignificant compared to blow to anti-Communism in Asia and throughout world if US-supported free Vietnam were lost to Communism. I believe it would be better to take slight loss of prestige in near future while time to attempt other solution remains, rather than continue support Diem should failure appear relatively certain. We have not reached this point, though I have grave misgivings re Diem's chances of success.

3. In view of possibility that Diem will fail to rally unified support of army in fight against Communism, believe we should consider other solutions. Two alternatives (neither of which is too promising, but each of which should be considered in event of Diem's failure) are suggested:

(A) Have Bao Dai name Quat to replace Diem as President of Council. Quat is able, forceful and resourceful and though obstacles to his success exist, if given chance he might succeed where Diem failed. Whether the various selfish groups in the country would give him that chance is question. He is northerner, has only slight political following and, as indicated in part I, faces considerable opposition. With complete confidence and support of Bao Dai, however, he might succeed; without it he would surely fail.

(B) (1) Second alternative is to have Bao Dai return to Vietnam under "state of emergency" conditions, assume Presidency of Council and rally entire nation to unified action. What is needed here more than anything else is leader who can fire imagination and patriotism of people and instill in them determination to fight for freedom of Vietnam. Bao Dai may be the last possible candidate for this task.

(2) I have been impressed with influence Bao Dai still exercises

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[4] Dated Dec. 6, p. 2341.

over leaders Vietnam. All leaders continue to refer to him as "His Majesty" and most regard him as the real source of authority Vietnam.

(3) To overcome obstacles, dramatize return and establish self as leader of Vietnam, Bao Dai could take steps such as:

(*a*) Turning over some of his holdings to government for distribution to peasants as step toward agrarian reform;
(*b*) Form an "emergency" Cabinet including best available Vietnamese—Quat, Diem, others;
(*c*) Announcing withdrawal French military forces by some specific date;
(*d*) Issuing temporary democratic charter to guide government during emergency;
(*g*[*e*]) Convening a representative assembly;
(*h*[*f*]) Calling for a constituent assembly.

6. Though course 1–*c* (gradual withdrawal from Vietnam) is least desirable, in all honesty and in view of what I have observed here to date it is possible this may be only sound solution. Should this be necessary, it may be wise to concentrate effort on saving Laos–Cambodia–Thailand–Burma–India line—if possible with latter's active support. Realize Department has probably given consideration to some such alternative. I will not presume to advise steps to be taken at this time, other than suggest that we attempt persuade India recognize Governments Laos and Cambodia soonest.

7. Summation: (*a*) At present I am highly dubious of Diem's ability to succeed but prefer to reserve final judgment till early part of January; (*b*) alternatives to support of Diem should be thoroughly explored within US Government.

8. Recommendations: (*a*) US continue to support Diem at Paris; (*b*) not consider alternatives paragraph 1–B with French until after I have communicated my final judgment to Department.

KIDDER

751G.5/12–1454 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, December 14, 1954—5 p. m.

2261. Repeated information Paris 710, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. Pass Defense and CINCPAC. From Collins. Follows text of understanding signed by Ely and me 13 December 1954: (Enclosure A mentioned in paragraph 1 contains force structure cited part II, Embtel 1830.)[1]

"Understanding on development and training of autonomous Viet-Nam armed forces.

I. Subject to approval by the Government of the United States of a program of direct aid to the State of Viet-Nam, the parties to this understanding are in accord that the initial Viet-Nam force structure to be attained by 1 July 1955 will be as shown in enclosure "A" hereto.

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[1] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

II. This force structure will be attained by reduction of the strength of the Viet-Nam armed forces, through selective discharge as far as possible of the least effective personnel, until the structure defined in enclosure "A" is achieved. Adjustments may be made in the rate of reduction in the light of the political and economic developments in Viet-Nam.

III. It is agreed in connection with the foregoing that full autonomy will have been granted by France to the armed forces of the State of Viet-Nam by not later than 1 July 1955. For the purposes of this minute "full autonomy" is understood to mean that all units of Viet-Nam armed forces will be commanded and staffed by Vietnamese personnel.

IV. The parties to this understanding consider that the United States can make a useful contribution to the development of effective Viet-Nam armed forces through the furnishing of instructors and advisers in the fields of organization and training. Recognizing that the actual direction of an effective program in these fields must be vested in a single authority, the parties agree that full responsibility for assisting the Government of Viet-Nam in the organization and training of its armed forces will be assumed by the chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) on 1 January 1955, under the overall authority of the commander-in-chief in Indochina.

V. The chief MAAG will in particular recognize this overall authority in all matters pertaining to the strategic direction of the French and Vietnamese armed forces and to the security of Viet-Nam against external aggression and internal subversion, in conformity with existing agreements.

VI. The parties agree that United States personnel will be assigned, together with French personnel, as advisers and instructors of the Vietnamese armed forces. All US and French advisory and training personnel assigned or detached to the Vietnamese armed forces will be under the direction of the chief MAAG. As the efficiency of the Vietnamese armed forces increases, the number of US and French advisers and trainers will be decreased.

VII. It is understood that the arrangements and agreements set forth herein are subject to the consent of the Government of Viet-Nam."

Memorandum for record to accompany understanding initialed by Ely and me. Ely, apparently under strong prompting his political advisers, had proposed long and detailed protocol which I told him frankly I could not accept. I therefore proposed simple memo in which clarifications he desired, but which were not appropriate in text of understanding itself, could be made matter of record. He agreed. Text follows:

"1) With reference to the force structure of the Viet-Nam armed forces specified in enclosure A, Generals Ely and Collins agreed that the size of such forces is the maximum that can be effectively maintained and trained within the limits imposed by US funds likely to be made available. They recognized that the forces of the size envisaged would be clearly insufficient in themselves to guarantee Viet-Nam against external aggression. However, they acknowledged the necessity of accepting the military risk inherent in the proposed levels of forces. They further recognized that under these conditions ultimate reliance must be placed on the Manila pact as a deterrent to a resumption of Viet Minh aggression.

2) With reference to the responsibility vested in the chief MAAG for assisting the Government of Viet-Nam in the organization and training of its armed forces, Generals Ely and Collins agreed that the chief MAAG will designate the positions to be filled by US and French advisory and training personnel. They recognized that assignments should be made to insure the most effective distribution of advisory and training skills, irrespective of the nationality of the personnel concerned.

3) Generals Ely and Collins agreed that for the purpose of the understanding the term 'internal subversion' in paragraph five means subversive action of a military character within Viet-Nam taken by the Viet Minh."[2]

KIDDER

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[2] In telegram 2457 to Saigon (also sent to Paris as 2249), Dec. 16, Collins was informed that State and Defense approved the understanding and the memorandum for the record. Collins was requested to so inform General Ely, and the Embassy in Paris was instructed to inform the Foreign Ministry. The telegram expressed the hope for rapid French approval. (751G.5/12–1454)

751G.00/12–1454 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, December 14, 1954—7 p. m.

2267. Repeated information Paris 714, Hanoi 436, Phnom Penh, Vientiane unnumbered. From Collins. I am seriously perturbed by rash of news stories datelined Washington giving in substantially accurate detail gist of my agreements with Ely and of US plans relating to military aid to Vietnam and proposed size of Vietnamese forces and FEC.[1] These stories, in particular one published in local press today from Washington (Vietnam Press—United Press) with headline "371 American Instructors Supported by 4600 French Will Train the New Vietnamese Army of 90,000 Men," are practically certain to attract attention of Viet Minh with possibility that they will lodge complaint with ICC.

This brings up important issue. With establishment of new Office of ICC in Saigon and announcement that fixed team (headed by Indian Naval Commander Menon) will devote themselves to implementation of Articles 16 and 17 of Geneva Agreement on Vietnam (Articles relating to rotation of military units and individuals and entry into Vietnam of war matériel) we must anticipate possibility that French may be requested by ICC submit various data as called for in Articles 16 and 17. These Articles are open to wide-range of interpretation and General Ely has implied to me that he does not see any reason why it necessary MAAG Mission should be restricted to 342 members, the number in Vietnam as of date of signature Accord. While that number has been widely quoted, I have instructed members of American agencies here to avoid reference to it or to any other definite personnel ceiling which would result from application of Geneva Accord. Article 16 makes no mention of American military as such, but is couched in general terms. It is quite possible as I see it that Accord might be read so that departing French personnel could be roplaced by American.

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[1] In telegram 2287 from Saigon, Dec. 15, General Collins reported that General Ely was also badly upset by the publication of this information. (120.251G/12–1554)

Although neither we nor Vietnamese are signatories to Accord, fact is that we should not embarrass unnecessarily either French who are responsible under Accord or our friends on ICC. Presently, according to Indian General Bhagat, information confirmed by Cerles, French Diplomatic Counselor, there is an increasing tendency for Indians to line up with Canadians.

To date we have not been supplying French or ICC with any data on movements of US military personnel in and out of Vietnam. I do not believe we have any obligation so to do, but arrival, probably tomorrow, of first increment of new MAAG personnel for training program may not go unobserved and may be challenged.

In order prevent confusion and be prepared answer as precisely and promptly as possible questions from either French or ICC, I request Department give me its views soon as possible on factors outlined above.[2]

KIDDER

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[2] In telegram 2455 to Saigon, Dec. 16, the Department of State instructed Collins to notify General Ely of arriving MAAG personnel, but not the ICC. (751G.00/12-1454)

OCB files, lot 62 D 430, "SEA No. 3"

Memorandum by the Chairman of the Special OCB Working Group on Indochina (Young) to the Chairman of the Operations Coordinating Board (Hoover)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] December 14, 1954.

Subject: Special Status Report on Indochina (Item 2, OCB Agenda, Dec. 15)

I. *General Developments*

1. US Agencies are developing more of an area approach to strengthen mainland Southeast Asia within the Burmese, Laotian,

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[1] This revised version was distributed to the OCB Assistants on Dec. 16.

Vietnamese land frontier with the Communist orbit. *In diplomatic relations*, the Philippines and Pakistan are considering recognition. India has just recognized Cambodia. *US field missions* have been requested to study and suggest ways and means (*a*) to develop more regional solidarity in mainland Southeast Asia, (*b*) to work out a suitable relationship between the three Associated States and the Manila Pact setup, and (*c*) to use specific projects of the US aid programs to promote closer relations among Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam, including the use of an US engineering firm for such purpose. *Washington planning* includes consideration in the Special Working Group on Indochina of how developments in Viet-Nam will affect our programs in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. The OCB Working Group on Southeast Asia is preparing a paper on promoting regional solidarity.

2. U.S. Missions in Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos are developing a consensus of views with the respective governments on political, military and economic objectives.

3. The arrangements for putting into effect direct aid to the three Associated States are reaching completion as a result of continuing negotiations in Paris and the three capitals.

4. Collaboration between US and French representatives in the three Associated States is progressing smoothly. The working relationship between General Collins and General Ely on General Collins' seven-point program is generally gratifying. The issue of coordinating committees is dead.

5. The Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians appear to have reached substantial agreement on how to liquidate the quadripartite agreement. While there are still some difficulties to be worked out, there are indications that the quadripartite negotiations will result in new agreements in the near future.

6. However, governmental instability and administrative inexperience seriously retard effective implementation of US policies in Viet-nam and Laos. The threat of Communist infiltration and subversion is still precarious.

II. *Viet-Nam* (This is based on Collins' 2250 of Dec. 13)

a. *Major US Operational Steps Recently Completed*

1. Defense has submitted a program of force levels, costs and development of Vietnamese forces. This plan has been transmitted to General Collins. Coordination is now completed.

2. On December 13 General Collins and General Ely signed the minute of understanding on the development and training of autonomous Vietnamese armed forces. This is a really significant development. It means the crash program sent on October 23 can be jointly implemented if Paris concurs and the Vietnamese accept the large cutback.

3. On December 1 Ely and Collins signed the minute of understanding on the recovery of certain items of MDAP equipment.[2]

4. The Embassy had delivered a letter to Prime Minister Diem proposing immediate negotiations on establishing detailed mechanisms for granting direct aid.[3]

b. *Political*

1. General Collins and General Ely continue to make progress in specific matters supporting the Diem government, and developing a land reform program, creating a national assembly and helping the Vietnamese Government with a vigorous propaganda and educational program. However, French official sources in Paris are insisting that we consider a replacement for Diem by mid-January. General Collins in his 2250 expresses misgivings regarding Diem's chances of success, but reserves final judgment until early January.

2. The Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects have adhered to the Diem government. The Binh Xuyen is no longer opposing Diem even though its support is uncertain. As a result the formation of a strong coalition, or movements in opposition to Diem, has been forestalled.

3. Diem has appointed a capable administrator for the refugee program and has reportedly nominated Quat as Defense Minister. General Collins considers Quat most able Vietnamese he has encountered, but Quat has not yet accepted due to undesirable stipulations. Failure to bring in Quat is most serious deficiency in Diem's administration. Diem has also made a tour of some of the provinces and a series of public appearances and statements. He has just issued a conciliatory proclamation on the army whose pacification work he has visited. His relations with Bao Dai have improved. The latter has assured us of his complete support for US policies in Viet-Nam.

4. The Viet Minh have shown by their recent propaganda against Collins and Diem that they fear entirely too much is being accomplished to their disadvantage, according to the Joint Weeka of 11 December.[4] Defected Viet Minh officials in the past have indicated that Diem is about the only Nationalist Vietnamese Communists have worried about.

5. The French may decide that prospects in Viet-Nam require the mass evacuation of 60,000 French nationals and 3 to 4 hundred

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[2] See footnote 6, p. 2280.

[3] In telegram 2348 from Saigon, Dec. 18, General Collins reported having delivered the letter under reference (dated Dec. 13). (751G.5 MSP/12–1854) The text of the letter is contained in telegram 2038 from Saigon, Dec. 1, as modified by amendments transmitted in telegram 2337 to Saigon, Dec. 8. (751G.5 MSP/12–154)

[4] Joint Weeka No. 50, Dec. 11, is not printed. (751G.00(W)/12–1154)

thousand Vietnamese beginning mid-January. This could have serious political repercussions on our objectives if too precipitous.

c. *Military*

1. The issue of the Chief of Staff has been settled, temporarily at least, with the appointment of General Ty as Chief of Staff, and General Vy as Inspector General. The way is opened to begin the key task of carrying out the crash program to develop an army loyal to the central government and capable of exterminating the Viet Minh throughout Free Viet-Nam. However, Diem and General Ty have both indicated serious concern over the drastic reduction in Vietnamese forces.

2. The movement of Viet Minh soldiers out of South Viet-Nam is being conducted smoothly with few incidents. As a progressive elimination of these Communist soldiers proceeds, more areas will be open for occupation and consolidation by civil and military authorities of Free Viet-Nam.

3. Clashes between Vietnamese national army and sects particularly Hoa Hao are disturbing evidences of continued lack of discipline and solidarity among anti-Communist groups in Free Viet-Nam. Diem is determined to bring dissident forces into line—with force if necessary. At the same time control by the central government and provincial governments remains weak throughout the country, while the Viet Minh underground apparatus is spreading.

4. The French Government has informed us that reduced US dollar support will force the reduction of the French Expeditionary Corps to about 80,000 by July 1, 1955, at the rate of 12,000 monthly during the first six months of the year. General Ely has been instructed to submit recommendations on subsequent reductions. He has mentioned 40,000 to General Collins. They both tentatively agree on the combined mission of those forces and the Vietnamese army (Collins' 2168),[5] although O'Daniel believes the French can keep 50,000 in Viet-Nam in 1956.

d. *Economic*

1. The refugee resettlement program is progressing. More than 500,000 have been successfully removed from the north. In addition about 200,000 soldiers and their families have been brought south. Approximately 200,000 of the refugees have been settled in permanent new homes in South and Central Viet-Nam. Plans provide for refugees, displaced persons, and demobilized military personnel.

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[5] In telegram 2168 from Saigon, Dec. 8, not printed, General Collins described his conversation with General Ely on Dec. 6 regarding the latter's tentative plans for the FEC in light of the proposed decrease in U.S. support. (751G.00/12–854)

2. It is becoming increasingly unlikely that the target date of January 1 for the start of direct American aid to the three Associated States will be met. This is particularly important in Viet-Nam. Settlement of the incompleted quadripartite negotiation in Paris and the establishment of individual national banks are the delaying factors. FOA is preparing emergency measures in the event the necessary national institutions have not been set up to insure the availability of sufficient piasters after January 1.

e. *North Viet-Nam*

1. The US Consulate continues to function, albeit with increasing limitations of an administrative and logistic nature. However, the Viet Minh has made no move during the past few weeks to force the Consulate out.

2. French policy toward the Viet Minh continues to be much less clearcut than their present cooperation with us in Saigon. Mendes-France has signed a letter to Ho Chi Minh defining the status of the Sainteny mission.[6] While ostensibly that mission has no diplomatic status, no matter what its character is called, it is an important instrument of French policy and a significant contact with the Viet Minh. At the same time the French firms in Hanoi have worked out some kind of a deal with the Viet Minh—the details are lacking.

III. *Cambodia*

1. *General.* Cambodia remains in the soundest and most hopeful condition of the three Associated States. The government is relatively stable. The top ministers are competent. The King is energetic and is loyally supported throughout most of Cambodia. General elections are planned for March, 1955. There is a disturbing trend of neutralism among some publications in Cambodian figures.

2. *Military.* The current operational problem in US-Cambodian relations is the evaluation of Cambodian military requirements and appropriate US aid in the light of our over-all objectives in the area. This subject is covered comprehensively in Ambassador McClintock's telegram No. 352 from Phnom Penh Dec. 13.[7] He recommends, with O'Daniel's concurrence, a force of 34,000 for internal security.

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[6] On Dec. 13, Minister Millet of the French Embassy provided Young (PSA) with the text of the letter (dated Dec. 8). Young's memorandum of his conversation with Millet and a translation of the letter are in file 651.51G/12–1354. The translation was forwarded to Saigon in telegram 2413 (2181 to Paris), Dec. 13. (751G.00/12–854)

[7] The reference telegram, a joint Embassy–MAAG communication, is not printed. It contained an evaluation of Cambodian military needs and an estimate of appropriate U.S. military aid. (751H.5/12–1354)

IV. *Laos*

1. *General.* The situation is difficult but not precarious at this time. After many weeks without a government, Laos now has a cabinet but not a strong one. The Prime Minister, Katay, is an opportunist and not a strong personality. The government has offered to negotiate with the Communist group in the two northeastern provinces. This has dangerous prospects. Minister Yost has taken a strong stand with the backing of the Department against this development. The Communists still maintain their foothold in the two northeastern provinces. The ICC has done nothing about it because the Indian Chairman is ideologically weak and wobbly.

2. Our current operational problem in Laos is the question of Lao military budget, and small forces and US aid. In a comprehensive telegram from Vientiane (174 of Dec. 10) Minister Yost has analyzed factors of this question in framework of Southeast Asian security. He concludes that there is a reasonable prospect of meeting the threats to Laos if Laotian, French, the US and Laotian neighbors each do their part.

V. *Summary of FOA Programs.*

1. In Viet-Nam FOA has enlarged its operations staff and has a new director of the USOM. FOA is implementing an expanded and economic technical program reorientated to meet changed conditions. This program is now designed particularly to help improve government administration, establish civil government and security in formerly Viet-Nam held areas, and counter Communist propaganda.

2. In Cambodia a separate FOA mission has been established in Phnom Penh. A new director of the mission has been assigned, and an expanded economic and technical assistance program is in operation. Emphasis in the program is on improving transportation facilities including the construction of a port and road connecting it with Phnom Penh. Priority is also placed on projects providing public administration training agricultural extension service and agricultural credit facilities.

3. In Laos a newly appointed director of a separate FOA mission is expected to arrive in Vientiane shortly. An expanded economic and technical assistance program is underway. The program stresses improvement and transportation particularly to provide better access to Cambodia, Thailand and the Gulf of Siam. A public administration training and advisory project will be undertaken.

4. A table is presented for illustrative purposes showing the tentative preliminary estimate of the costs of our programs for the three Associated States.

[Attachment]

TENTATIVE COST ESTIMATE OF PROGRAMS FOR VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, AND LAOS IN FY 1955 AND 1956

(Millions of Dollars)

	Viet Nam		*Cambodia*		*Laos*		*Total*	
	FY 1955	*FY 1956*	*FY 1955*	*FY 1956*	*FY 1955*	*FY 1956*	*FY 1955*	*FY 1956*
Defense Support	*74.5	†80.0	13.2	†28.0	7.3	†17.0	*95.0	125.0
Direct Forces Support	‡140.0	‡193.1	‡30.9	‡69.7	§20.0	§40.0	190.9	302.8
FEC Support	¶50.0	¶50.0					¶50.0	¶50.0
Total							335.9	477.8
Maintenance and Military Supply (MDAP)							‖154.0	‖154.0

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*Includes $40 million for Vietnamese refugee resettlement program. [Footnote in the source text.]

†Based on $125 million total estimate (for the three States). [Footnote in the source text.]

‡Estimate based on latest JCS estimate. [Footnote in the source text.]

§Tentative figure based on Legation Vientiane's recommendation of $40–50 million needed during CY 55. Legation Vientiane reports a prospective CY 55 military budget of $62 million, compared to $37 million in CY 54. [Footnote in the source text.]

‖Amount for maintenance and military supply included by Department of Defense on basis estimates received from General O'Daniel on cost repairing and reconditioning MDAP equipment returned to U.S. authorities. [Footnote in the source text.]

¶Obtained by splitting $100 million figure for CY 55. [Footnote in the source text.]

Editorial Note

On December 14, 1954, H. Struve Hensel, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, transmitted a report on the military aid situation in Indochina to Senator Alexander Wiley, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. For text, see *United States–Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967*, Book 10, pages 818–819.

120.251G/12–1554 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, December 15, 1954—9 p. m.

[Received 10:12 a. m.]

2285. Sent niact Paris 717. Paris for the Secretary. From Collins. *Part I.*

Ely reviewed with me fifteenth conversations he has held past two days with Deputy Defense Minister Minh, and Generals Soai and Phuong re possible appointment of Quat as Defense Minister.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

1. Ely stated Minh will not serve under Quat nor will Minh accept any other cabinet post than Defense. Ely believes Minh sincerely thinks he has army in hand and that Quat's appointment would cause new army crisis. Moreover Minh believes he has influence over Diem in spheres other than military; that he has averted other difficulties which could have plagued government, such as serious trouble with sects; and that he has kept thing moving.

2. Generals Soai and Phuong both voiced profound objections to Quat. Soai would prefer to leave government if Quat were appointed. Phuong was less clear cut in expression but gave Ely to believe he fears Quat's Dai Viet party would put squeeze on Cao Dai if Quat were appointed.

3. I asked Ely if all this were true where we should go from here. He answered he had posed same question to all three men, but had not received conclusive reply. Ely himself had no names to suggest within existing frame of reference. I asked whether sects were represented in cabinet in proportion to their real population strength. Ely said he was uncertain whether their numerical representation was equitable, but that sects were over-represented as far as capacities went. I asked Ely's opinion as to whether we should drop Quat for time being, or continue urge on Diem. He said he felt sure Diem was not using sects as pretext to avoid naming Quat and that genuine difficulty exists owing Quat's past hostility to sects. I told Ely I had learned Diem was prepared promote Minh to full ministerial rank and asked whether we should accept this solution. Ely said he thought we should go along with this decision but not accept proposition Quat may [be?] permanently set aside. I agreed.

4. I asked Ely whether he was satisfied with government under new formula, or whether he thought we should try strengthen it further. He replied he was not satisfied although government would be somewhat improved if Minh were named Defense Minister. There is need strengthen Interior Ministry soonest, and Ely sees only two candidates: Tam, who has administrative machinery ready put in operation, and Bay Vien, who is energetic and able, despite his unsavory reputation. I commented to Ely that solution to major problems reached here must be acceptable to Vietnamese, French and Americans and if effective government cannot be constituted, I must consider whether or not to recommend US withdrawal from Vietnam. Ely said he had been reluctant to see Diem appointed in first place, as he is not competent to organize a government. I replied that is now past history; question is what can we do now. Ely answered that solution he would propose would go beyond my terms of reference, which are to support Diem as he himself has been ordered to support present government. Ely said we should see what develops in next two weeks and

then consider at that time whether other solution should be sought. I asked what such other solution might be. Ely answered that there are no pat solutions to problems here and that we should have to consider a whole range of possible alternatives. I said that of course without instructions I could not officially explore this matter, but informally I wondered who Ely thought could form a government without meeting the same difficulties as Diem and also be able to counter the appeal of Ho Chi Minh. Ely replied that Diem has lost prestige and is now supported only by himself and me. The sects, although in government, do not really support Diem and were induced join government only under French pressure.

5. I asked Ely whom the sects would support. He replied only Bao Dai himself. However, if the chief of state returned, he would have to do so under strict conditions set before he arrives, after which he must be given absolute political freedom to run government. Principal conditions Ely would impose are that Bao Dai bring his family, live in Saigon, and take political responsibility for government's operations. He said that he would not have made any such recommendations three or four months ago but speaking now as a Frenchman, he must say the French have been wrong not to have played "Bao Dai card" sooner and to better effect. Ely said of course Bao Dai would be our last card to play. Ely commented that there are various possibilities within Bao Dai's solution; for example, Diem could remain, possibly even as Prime Minister, if Bao Dai were at hand to impose on all who might otherwise be disposed make trouble, a truly representative and effective cabinet. I replied that direct aid scheduled to begin January 1 and decision to undertake training and give such aid must be made soonest. Solutions other than present Diem government would take time, and nothing we had said in informal exchange of views should be taken as signifying any alteration in US support of Diem.

6. With respect to immediate situation, I asked Ely if we should try secure appointment of Bay Vien as Interior Minister. Ely agreed that we should make such an effort and offered to speak both Bay Vien and Diem in this regard. Bay Vien would probably accept, and while Diem might say that Sects would object, Ely believes objections would be insignificant.

Part II.

7. Diem told Fishel December 14 that Thai, Cao Daist Information Minister, informed Prime Minister Sects could not be reconciled to appointment of Quat. Diem believes threat Sects may rebel is genuine and since army not prepared meet threats, latter must be seriously considered. Diem believes army needs month or two of training before ready enforce Government's will upon Sects, should that prove necessary. Diem said he felt American belief Sects did not constitute real

threat was derived from French, since latter would like to see Sects rebel, defeat nation [garble] and cause government to fall. Diem said further that when Sects were no longer needed in government he would appoint Quat Defense Minister.

8. Diem told Fishel he had offered Ministerial rank to Minh and assured him of full authority in Defense Ministry. Minh replied that since Generals Vy and Ty were learning new jobs, it would be better if his appointment as Defense Minister were postponed perhaps one month. Under pressure from Diem, Minh agreed accept post in two weeks. Morning 15th Diem said he had persuaded Minh accept post of Defense Minister at once and that he would take office 15th or 16th.

Kidder

751G.00/12–1554 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 15, 1954—7:46 p. m.

2444. This afternoon Robertson saw Senator Mansfield re Saigon's 2250 repeated Paris 706.[2] Mansfield reiterated his views outlined in paragraphs 1–4 in Deptel 2333 to Saigon repeated Paris 2103[3] emphasizing difficulties and complexities facing us in Free Vietnam. He continues believe we should support Diem but make clear desirability and necessity for Diem to cooperate with us in return. This means he must appoint and delegate responsibility to competent ministers and for good of country relieve his relatives from inside track. Senator Mansfield recognizes Diem's weaknesses but emphasized his virtues of honesty, incorruptibility, patriotism and self-evident anti-Communism. He fears replacement would create seriously increased confusion and even anarchy.

If Diem and Vietnamese cannot with our support create reasonably effective setup in Vietnam, or if French are *sub rosa* manipulating deal with Viet Minh at expense Free Vietnam, only choice for US is withdrawal effort bolster Free Vietnam, in Senator's opinion. He recognizes sharp reduction US aid or withdrawal support Free Vietnam could have tremendous repercussions Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

He again expressed strong opinion Quat should be defense minister. He is willing to have you pass these views to Diem discreetly if that would help your efforts rapidly improve competence Diem Government. Saigon's 2285 repeated Paris 717[4] arrived after Mansfield interview. Therefore leave to your discretion transmittal Senator's views as advice of good friend to Diem.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Repeated to Paris for information as telegram 2231 for MacArthur.

[2] Dated Dec. 13, p. 2362.

[3] See footnote 1, p. 2350.

[4] *Supra.*

Re Bao Dai, Senator expressed considerable skepticism and reluctance re his return Saigon.

Mansfield thought his views might carry some weight with Diem because he knows Mansfield is impartial, objective and Diem has had printed and distributed 100,000 copies Mansfield report.

HOOVER

751G.00/12-1654 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, December 16, 1954—7 p. m.

2303. Sent niact Paris 724. Department pass Defense eyes only Hensel, Davis and JCS. Department eyes only Acting Secretary and Robertson. Paris eyes only Secretary State, Secretary Defense and Radford. From Collins. Re Embtels 1830,[1] 2108,[2] 2250,[3] Department 2285[4] (paragraph 8) repeated Paris 602, 665, 706, 717.

1. Decision of Diem not to appoint Quat Defense Minister is final development that convinces me that Diem does not have the capacity to unify divided factions in Vietnam, and that unless some such action is taken as indicated in paragraph 7 below, this country will be lost to communism. Reasons for Diem's decision probably compounded of (1) unwillingness to delegate control of Vietnam armed forces to any strong man; (2) fear of Quat as potential successor; (3) opposition of sects; (4) influence of brothers Luyen and Nhu; (5) desire to retain Minh in government.

2. Whatever the reasons, the failure to utilize Quat epitomizes lack of unity among Vietnamese and lack of decisive leadership on part of Diem. Minh refused to submerge his personal ambitions, even for a few months transition period under Quat or anyone else. Luyen again demonstrated his ability to cause Diem to reverse a decision already taken (Diem had told me prior to Luyen's return from Paris that he would appoint Quat). The veto power of the sects over any changes in the government that are likely to result in a weakening of their private domains has been confirmed. Another strong positive man, Quat, has been blocked from having a hand in reorganizing and controlling the armed forces. And all of these negative results have required a month of lengthy discussions, evasions of basic issues, and wasted opportunities.

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[1] Dated Nov. 15, p. 2250.

[2] Dated Dec. 6, p. 2341.

[3] Dated Dec. 13, p. 2362.

[4] Reference is to telegram 2285 from Saigon, Dec. 15, p. 2375.

3. Minh is a good man, though young and inexperienced. O'Daniel feels that if Diem delegates full authority to Minh, the latter may be able to heal wounds of Diem–Hinh, Ty–Vy, Phan Rang–Phan Thiet affairs and bring stability and sanity to government-army relationships. But it is highly doubtful to me that Minh, or anyone else under present conditions, can create a single, cohesive national army from the five separate forces now existing—the Cao Daist, Hoa Hao, Binh Xuyen, national guard, and the present national army. With anticipated opposition from the sects and some from Diem himself, who is loathe to disband his own private force (national guard), it will take stronger leadership from Diem and Minh than either has shown to date to reduce and amalgamate these forces.

4. What is true of the armed forces is likely to be true in the resettlement of refugees and land reform. When I told Diem recently that our FOA people were having difficulty in getting down to business with the Vietnam agriculture officials, Diem reminded me that the Minister of Agriculture is a Hoa Hao and the Hoa Hao are fearful of the effect of land reform on their extensive control of rice lands. Government officials hesitate to place refugees on French-owned rice lands or in the French-owned rubber plantations. And so on, one excuse for inaction after another.

5. Fact is that of the fine program of reforms announced by Diem in September, no definite progress has been achieved in converting words into deeds in any field.

6. I had hoped Diem would broaden and strengthen his cabinet by addition of Quat and perhaps even Bay Vien. Latter, despite his lurid past, has demonstrated organizing ability and his recently indicated desire to become "honorable" and to assist government. With Quat in government, Quat might have done much gradually to get sects in line and through his practical political ability have injected some flexibility and drive, both of which are now woefully lacking. At same time Quat might have acquired greater stature in public eye which might later have rendered him more eligible for higher post if later found necessary replace Diem. Unfortunately, this was probably deduced by brother Luyen and Diem also. I feel sure that fear of Quat's ability is at root of sects and Diem's opposition.

7. After weighing all available evidence, I am now convinced that in face of the positive threat of Ho Chi Minh's regime, it will take decisive action and dramatic leadership from the Vietnamese themselves to save free Vietnam. Neither French nor Americans can substitute for such action and leadership. Apparently the only Vietnamese who might be competent to galvanize the country into unified action is Bao Dai. Though I do not know the man, and realize his many disabilities, it is possible he might furnish the necessary impact if he

were to return and take active direction of the government, whether he retained Diem or appointed Quat or someone else as Premier, or assumed the office himself. Almost all Vietnamese with whom I have talked, including Diem, look instinctively to Bao Dai as the ultimate source of authority. Of course, if we and the French were to support his return, specific conditions would have to [be] stipulated in advance, generally as indicated in Part II, paragraph 3B, Embtel 2250. I realize also that Bao Dai's return would furnish excellent propaganda material for Communists, but if they don't have such material in hand they will manufacture it anyway. So we should not permit this aspect to determine our course, after weighing all other factors.

8. I recognize that we must continue to support the Diem Government for some time at least. But I recommend that we not now consummate an agreement with the Vietnamese to assume on 1 January responsibility for training their forces or for giving direct military aid. We should continue to place American officers with staff of Vietnam army and aid in developing training plans and pacification plans. We should continue to talk with Vietnamese with a view to reaching common accord on size and composition of forces. But we should not conclude formal agreements on training or support for specific force levels until decision reached in Washington as to our ultimate policy and commitments here. Similarly, planning should go on for initiation of direct military aid commencing 1 January, but we should not commit ourselves to any given volume of aid until US has adopted definitive policy with respect to Vietnam. Meanwhile I would strongly urge consideration of bringing Bao Dai back under one or other of the variants indicated in paragraph 7 above and paragraph 2 Embtel 2250. (See also paragraph 5, Embtel 2285, repeated Paris 717, for Ely's views.) Therefore my present recommendations are:

a. Continue to support Diem along present lines for short while longer but without committing US to specific aid programs;

b. Consider urgently, as possible alternative, the early return of Bao Dai;

c. If after short period of further test Diem Government fails to achieve substantial progressive action, and if return of Bao Dai is acceptable to US Government, to support his prompt return;

d. If return of Bao Dai is not acceptable to US Government, assuming Diem Government continues to demonstrate inability to unite free Vietnam behind an aggressive program, I recommend reevaluation of our plans for assisting Southeast Asia with special attention to proposal contained in paragraph 6, Part II Embtel 2250.

9. I am sorry to have to make such a discouraging report, but in all honesty I have to present to you my present convictions because of their possible effect on US 1956 budget about to be presented to Congress. Should it be determined that in view of the unsound situation in

Vietnam the US should gradually withdraw its support from this country, then it would be necessary, in my opinion, to increase the aid to the French expeditionary corps so that it would remain strong enough during the next year to permit the US to withdraw essential equipment which might otherwise fall into Communist hands. It appears to me, therefore, that we should retain as much flexibility as possible with reference to financial aid for the FEC.

10. Conclusion: It is possible that by a month from now some radical improvement will have come about but I strongly doubt it. Meanwhile, I feel that we should make a sober reevaluation of the situation here before we commit over $300 million and our national prestige under current conditions. I will continue to carry on along same lines I have been following, but will await instructions while temporarily dragging feet, if necessary, with respect to definite commitments, as indicated in paragraph 8.

KIDDER

790.5/12–1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State [1]

SECRET PHNOM PENH, December 17, 1954—3 p. m.
[Received 9:55 a. m.]

378. Pouched Saigon; Bangkok; Vientiane unnumbered. Joint Embassy USOM message. Reference Department telegram 181, sent Bangkok 1456, Saigon 2295, Vientiane 133.[2]

1. We agree that U.S. objectives Southeast Asia would be greatly furthered by strengthening ties between Buddhist countries this area. This task easiest between Cambodia and Thailand which, in spite of recent wartime Thai invasion and annexation of Cambodian western provinces, already have closest ties as outlined our 221 to Department.[3] In general terms measures discussed in sections C and D of that telegram provide framework of kind of projects we feel can usefully be taken to strengthen existing ties of race, culture, religion and common problems, and create new ones of trade and of common action to meet these problems.

2. Two most important immediate problems to which projects should be tailored are both in area of communications—one linguistic and other physical. First, educated Cambodians (now French speaking) must be taught English language to enable them to deal effectively with Thailand and other Asian neighbors, and provide channel

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.
[2] Dated Dec. 7, p. 2349.
[3] Telegram 221 from Phnom Penh, Nov. 3, is not printed. (790.5/11–354)

of communication with them. Second, rail, road, sea and air communications must be expanded and strengthened between two countries.

3. While we hope South Vietnam may be saved from ultimate Communist take-over, it is vital to plan against probability that Saigon port and lower reaches of Mekong, on which Cambodian foreign trade now depends, will soon be in Communist hands. If Cambodia is not provided with other egress to outside world, nation will then be in parlous situation. High priority projects this regard include deep water port on Gulf of Siam (Embassy telegram 234)[4] and improvement rail and road link with Thailand. Specific projects are:

(*a*). Immediate renovation of 25 miles railroad track from Poipet to Aranh-Chas (this project now advanced planning stage will be on loan basis, with rails and ties probably coming from stocks originally destined for Vietnam military aid).

(*b*). Early establishment of through freight and passenger railroad service Bangkok–Phnom Penh. At present freight can be scheduled through if arranged in advance but passenger service not available. Although Thai rolling stock can operate in Cambodia, Cambodian passenger cars too large to transit Thailand tunnels and bridges. Early attention should be given to converting Cambodian stock to standard sizes able to operate in Thailand, or to arranging agreement with Thai Government for use of its cars on through service here. (Thais presently refuse consider latter solution.)

(*c*). Continued extension of highway maintenance service and early widening of RN 5 and 6 (Phnom Penh–Poipet).

(*d*). At same time connections must be greatly improved. Although now there are semi-weekly regular flights between Bangkok and Phnom Penh more flight service necessary. MATS Bangkok–Saigon flight should include stop at Phnom Penh; and CAT airline project (Embassy telegram 168)[5] should be expedited. Also agreement should be reached whereby Thai airlines as well as CAT would make additional stop in Siemreap to assist in developing mutually profitable tourist trade, and take fullest advantage of historic cultural connections between these two countries. Eventually Air India, because of Indian origin Angkor, might be encouraged to develop Indian tourism at Siemreap.

(*e*). Other useful projects this area would include extension to Bangkok of VHF telecommunication project now under consideration between Phnom Penh and Saigon, and negotiation of agreement for freer Cambodian access to seaports which would provide terminal for sea lane from Cambodian ports to Thailand and outside areas.

(*f*). At same time uncertainty as to Saigon's future makes it necessary to obtain Thai permission for use Bangkok port as sea terminus for Cambodian export and imports.

4. To facilitate cooperation and technical liaison, one of most urgent projects is establishment English language teaching program to break down barriers imposed by French culture between Laos and Cambodia

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[4] Telegram 234 from Phnom Penh, Nov. 6, is not printed. (951H.541/11–654)

[5] Telegram 168 from Phnom Penh, Oct. 15, is not printed. (651.51G/10–1554)

and other Asian states. If possible, advance stages this instruction could occur in Thailand, thus achieving at same time second objective of strengthening ties between nationalities.

5. To as large extent as possible common economic and social problems in border areas should be solved cooperatively by Cambodia and Thailand. For example rinderpest control projects should be firmed up and Thailand-Cambodian cooperation encouraged. This would help prevent spread of disease between countries and within them, and remove one possible cause friction between them.

6. Third major project area—training of Cambodian technicians and administrators—can be handled similarly to English language program. To considerable extent Thai training facilities should be used in training of Cambodian administrators and technicians needed in coming stage when Cambodia will be groping to equip itself with techniques necessary for survival in modern world. One such project about to begin is Thai training of Cambodian police personnel (Embtel 207).[6]

7. Fourth project area and most fertile field for strengthening Thai-Cambodian ties lies in Buddhist Church. Common religion, common philosophic attitude toward things spiritual and temporal, constitute one of most important linking factors between two countries. This can be exploited tactfully and quietly. English language training and cultural exchange of bonzes and students in Buddhist schools would be effective ways to encourage better relations. At same time Cambodian priests and students in Thailand would expose them to direct reflection of US attitudes and demonstrate effective western cooperation with oriental country so similar to theirs. No reason why Thai bonzes should not also come here.

8. Re last sentence second paragraph and final paragraph reference telegram, believe it worth re-emphasizing that Cambodia's principal orientation and most developed ties are with other Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia, which share Indian cultural Thai ethnic origins, and not in framework of former French colonial system. Certainly relations between Cambodia and Vietnam must be improved and all possible ties strengthened or created, but these ties are now tenuous and factors tending to divide these states seem stronger than those linking them. Would thus be dangerously unrealistic to eschew any project which might be useful in bringing Thailand, Laos and Cambodia more closely together because of any fear that this might drive wedge between three former Associated States. At present Cambodians are watching with alarm political developments in South Vietnam and most of them are convinced that area doomed to fall to Viet Minh. Any development or any internal Vietnam project which

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[6] Telegram 207 from Phnom Penh, Oct. 29, is not printed. (851H.501/10-2954)

serves to strengthen free Vietnam Government and bring South Vietnam more fully under its control will automatically better Cambodian-Vietnam relations.

Of first order of importance is Vietnam Government control of seas and consequent stop to lawless Hoa Hao excursions into Cambodia and depredations to Cambodian residents in South Vietnam (Embassy despatch 139).[7] Secondly and equally important is successful conclusion present quadripartite economic discussions in Paris, particularly as related to Cambodian use of free port area in Saigon and free navigation of Mekong. Until South Vietnam is securely united against Communist threat, there is little chance that individual technical or economic projects can overcome Cambodian fear and long bred dislike for their eastern neighbor. In fact, our own propaganda effort against Viet Minh increases Cambodian enmity and fear of Vietnam.

Although not a fastidious concept, we might as well accept fact that in psychological [terms?] it is easier to incite hatred than friendship. In SE Asia generally it is more practical to fan secular smoldering embers of dread of China than it is to speak wishfully of "strengthening ties with free Vietnam".

McClintock

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[7] Despatch 139 from Phnom Penh, Dec. 4, is not printed. (651G.51H/12-454)

751G.00/12-1754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Department of State[1]

SECRET

Paris, December 17, 1954—4 p. m.
[Received 3:16 p. m.]

Secto 11. Limit distribution. Secretary and Eden had general discussion last evening on Indo-China. Eden mentioned recent reports from McDonald and stressed the British concern re Vietnam. While situation in Cambodia was reassuring, and in Laos seemed improving, Vietnam was very vulnerable. There was some discussion re Diem during which Graves[2] indicated Diem lacked support of sects, army, police and Catholics of center. In fact he had little support and lacked ability to spark free Vietnam into energetic action. While he might be useful as figurehead, he did not have necessary qualities of leadership.

Secretary recognized Diem's deficiencies but said he had not heard of any acceptable substitute. Therefore to discuss alternatives to Diem when there no acceptable alternative was simply to undermine him. He mentioned Senator Mansfield's views on the situation as indicative of general feeling in Foreign Relations Committee.

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[1] Secretary Dulles was in Paris for the North Atlantic Council Meeting, Dec. 16-18. Briefing materials for the use of the Secretary in discussions on Indochina during his stay in Paris are in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 421.

[2] Sir Hubert Graves, former British Ambassador in Vietnam who had recently returned from that country for retirement.

Secretary said he understood possible alternative to Diem might be Bao Dai's return to Vietnam and asked Eden's reaction. Eden took dim view and said he had no confidence in Bao Dai to whom he referred as a "baccarat king". Graves said Bao Dai's return at present would be premature but that this was a possibility which might seriously be considered in the relatively near future if it was clear Diem had failed.

Secretary then outlined General Collins' concept re composition and mission of Vietnamese forces explaining cost to U.S. of such a program would be about $300 million, adding that over-all program for three Associated States was in order of magnitude of $500 million. Secretary explained this included $100 million for FEC and gave Eden latest info on French thinking on reduction of FEC. This was a tremendous investment, but Secretary believed we should do everything possible to try to hold south Vietnam and at least try in time to bolster Laos and Cambodia. Eden agreed and was obviously impressed with the magnitude of the cost.

Secretary then outlined U.S. views re training Vietnamese.

He told Eden that U.S. had no intention of increasing MAAG beyond the level obtained when Geneva agreement was signed. This raised real problem with respect to training Vietnamese and would require continuing use of French military personnel. He also explained that certain U.S. administrative personnel would be replaced by training personnel, but we did not plan to go beyond the ceiling imposed by Geneva accord. Eden seemed much reassured and expressed full agreement with what Secretary had said, adding that continuation of French training personnel in Laos was vital.

There was general discussion on desirability of engaging India's responsibility with respect to preventing Laos and Cambodia falling into Communist hands. The Secretary said that anything Eden could do in this direction would be of great importance and commented that if India would be willing to effectively guarantee Laos and Cambodia against Communist domination, the U.S. would be glad to bow out of the picture. Eden said it would be very helpful if he could pass on to Nehru the Secretary's thoughts about the importance of the role which India could play as outlined by the Secretary and the Secretary agreed that he could do so. Eden also indicated Pakistan, India and Burma were moving in direction of recognizing Laos and Cambodia which would also be helpful.

As meeting was on point of breaking up, Secretary said he understood there had been suggestion of an informal tripartite (US–UK–

French) meeting in Washington. He said he agreed to such a meeting but that it should be kept informal and serve as a focal point for an exchange of views on Indo-China. Need for meeting to be secret was stressed in view of unfavorable reaction which would be caused in Australia and New Zealand and the Associated States if word leaked out the Big Three were discussing Indo-China. Eden fully agreed. Atmosphere during meeting was extremely cordial with Eden expressing great appreciation for info and views given him by Secretary.[3]

DULLES

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[3] Counselor MacArthur, who accompanied Secretary Dulles to Paris, pursued the question of Indochina in a discussion with Denis Allen of the British Delegation on Dec. 17. MacArthur's memorandum of that conversation is in Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 421.

851G.131/12-1754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

SECRET PRIORITY

PARIS, December 17, 1954—6 p. m.
[Received 3:28 p. m.]

2582. Repeated information Saigon 380, Phnom Penh 46, Vientiane 30. Department pass FOA. This is joint Embassy-USOM/F message. Reference: Deptel 2438 to Saigon, repeated information 2215 to Paris, Dec 15.[1]

1. Meeting requested by FinMin Faure was held afternoon December 16. Present were Governor Stassen, Under Secretary Treasury Burgess,[2] Timmons and McGrew (Embassy and USOM/F), Glendinning and Taylor (Treasury). On French side Faure was accompanied by Delouvrier, Wormser (FonOff), Sadrin and reps Min Associated States.

2. Faure opened by saying there were four subjects he wished to discuss with Governor Stassen. They were: 1954 Indochina aid program for French Expeditionary Corps (FEC); 1954 program for Associated States Forces (ASF); aid for FEC in calendar 1955; and offshore procurement. Last subject, which not related Indo-China questions, being reported separate telegram.

3. Faure noted that normal reimbursements under 1954 Indochina aid program have been resumed and he expressed to Governor Stassen appreciation of French Government for this action.

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[1] In telegram 2438 to Paris, Dec. 15, not printed, the Department of State advised the Embassy that more guidance on the aid question would be forthcoming after the Stassen-Faure discussion of the subject. (851G.131/12-1254)

[2] W. Randolph Burgess, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs.

4. With respect 1954 FEC program, Faure referred to recent series of discussions Washington and Paris between reps two governments on this question, beginning with Stassen–Bonnet conversation on November 24.[3] Faure stated his understanding that program would now go forward on basis originally agreed except that no reimbursements would be made for matériel not delivered into Indo-China before December 31, 1955. He indicated further that French would of course take all reasonable measures to exclude from shipments to Indo-China matériel not actually needed there. Governor Stassen replied that since circumstances upon which original program had been based had undergone substantial change, he could not give assurance at this time that modification re matériel would be only exception it might prove necessary to make. He indicated he could not go beyond this position at present time. Faure said that he of course understood the practical problems involved, and expressed belief that program could be completed in manner satisfactory to both parties.

5. As regards 1954 ASF program, Faure said only one problem outstanding, i.e., question of Associated States defense contribution. He recapitulated figures already transmitted Washington (see Paris Tousfo 316, rptd Usom 60 to Saigon, December 1)[4] showing reduction in estimated total cost ASF in 1954 from 1953 [*sic*] billion francs to 168 billion francs, and stated that even more recent estimates, which were still tentative, indicated that total cost would probably not exceed 145 billion francs. Faure pointed out that such a reduction in cost would yield fairly large savings. He said that in these circumstances he wished propose that September 1953 agreement[5] be executed as written, i.e., that both the "contribution" and the "savings" clauses be maintained and applied. Thus part of savings would go to the French to offset their contingent liability to make up shortfall below 60 billion francs in Associated States contribution and remainder of savings would accrue to US Government, thereby reducing the $385 million aid commitment.

6. Governor Stassen replied that contribution and savings clauses in September 1953 agreement had been based on assumption that savings in question would arise from more efficient utilization of funds. However, the savings now under discussion will result from cessation hostilities. It therefore seems to US Government that question of savings should be re-examined and a new settlement arrived at with French Government, which would meet expectation on part of US public and

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[3] See footnote 3, p. 2284.
[4] Not printed.
[5] For the U.S.-French exchange of letters, Sept. 29, 1953, see p. 812.

US Congress that we should benefit from these changed circumstances. US view is certainly that we should seek obtain maximum contribution by Associated States (principally, of course, Vietnam) which they can reasonably be expected to bear without undue drain on their resources. US and French representatives Saigon are undoubtedly in best position to evaluate what amount as contribution should be. It therefore seems advisable to ask them to make such a joint evaluation and report their conclusions to US and French Govts. In light their findings problem of how to distribute total costs 1954 ASF program could be thereupon considered further. In reply to question from French, Governor Stassen made it clear that he does not envisage any discussion of matter with Vietnamese Government at this particular time. For time being consultations would be on strictly bilateral basis between Generals Collins and Ely.

7. Faure stated he welcomed Governor Stassen's suggestion and that he was willing request General Ely to undertake joint study with General Collins of question size Associated States contribution. Faure said that French Government had only undertaken to guarantee 60 billion franc Associated States contribution on basis that any savings would first be used by French to offset any shortfall in 60 billion franc AS contribution. Faure reiterated that he did not foresee any possibility of contribution by French Government towards 60 billion franc figure. He referred again to 145 billion franc revised estimate of total 1954 costs (expenditures to date have amounted to 108 billion francs) and stated that since it now appeared certain that total savings would be large (approximately 50 billion francs), it seemed probable to him that satisfactory agreement could be worked out which would avoid necessity any French contribution and at same time would assure US Government of considerable savings. Faure underlined French belief that Associated States can and should pay a total of 45 billion francs, and that if French and US hold to such a position, this amount will be forthcoming. He added that of course if US wishes see Associated States pay less, French would naturally have no objection as long as no contribution from France was expected.

8. Re US aid to FEC in calendar 1955, Faure said that although French Government did not yet have full information from General Ely, their opinion at present time is that proposed $100 million US aid figure appears very low in relation to needs. He asked Governor Stassen to comment on how US sees this problem. Gov Stassen said that US realizes that if French cannot contribute more than 60 billion francs toward FEC costs in 1955, this amount plus $100 million US aid (35 billion francs) would mean a considerable reduction in FEC

during 1955. The US strategic concept is that it is impossible for FEC or AS national armies to constitute force capable of stopping maximum aggressive action from North Vietnam. US position that we must rely on SEATO to accomplish this purpose, and AS a deterrent, and that mission of forces in South Vietnam should be primarily that of providing for internal security of that area.

9. Gov Stassen added that US has reviewed its world-wide commitments, resources and priorities under Mutual Security Program, and that it does not appear that US will be able to make available more than $100 million of aid for FEC in 1955. He remarked that this $100 million figure will be made up partly from counterpart accruing from FY 1953 and previous aid allocations to France, and partly from new dollars drawn from FY 1955 appropriations.

10. Delouvrier explained that irrespective of rate at which FEC repatriated in 1955, total expenditures will approach a figure of 130 billion francs. Deducting from this figure the 50 billion franc French contribution and 35 billion francs of American aid ($100 million), a gap is left of 35 billion francs. Faure said problem is: how can this gap be closed? Referring to fact that General Ely arriving Paris evening December 17, Faure inquired whether it would be possible have further discussion with Governor Stassen on December 18, after French Government had had opportunity to consult with Ely. Governor Stassen said that he would be agreeable to a further meeting on Saturday, the hour to be fitted into the NATO schedule.[6] He inquired what force goals the 130 billion franc total cost estimate assumes. Delouvrier stated that French will repatriate 12,000 men per month during first half 1955, bringing total strength of FEC down to 70,000–80,000 level as of July 1. For second half calendar 1955, General Ely is bringing a proposal which he has been discussing with General Collins. French remarked that 130 billion franc figure assumes a very low total strength of FEC at end calendar 1955, and that this planning assumption would not necessarily be in accord with recommendations that General Ely is bringing to Paris. French added that perhaps even for an internal security mission, FEC will need considerably more men at end 1955 than are envisaged in plan on which 130 billion franc figure based.

11. Separate telegram follows regarding proposal for consultations in Saigon envisaged paras 6 and 7 above.

DILLON

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[6] In telegram 2609 from Paris, Dec. 20, the Embassy reported that the Stassen–Faure meeting contemplated for Saturday, Dec. 18, had not been held due to the fact that the French had not had sufficient time to consult with General Ely. (751G.5 MSP/12–2054)

751G.00/12-1754

Memorandum by Ambassador Donald R. Heath to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)

TOP SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] December 17, 1954.

Subject: Comments on Saigon Telegram 2303 [1]

1. The situation in Viet-Nam at the time of General Collins' arrival on November 7 might be described as follows:

a. The French had lost a disastrous battle at Dien Bien Phu and that Communist military victory had been compounded by a humiliating diplomatic defeat for the Free World at Geneva. The Communists had achieved a level of international recognition and position through these developments far exceeding any previous status.

b. Ngo Dinh Diem took office on July 7. He was the first "Nationalist" to assume the Prime Ministership. He was and is, anti-French, anti-Communist and personally honest. He is politically inept, stubborn and suspicious. In his four months of responsibility he had been faced with massive opposition, including a rebellious Army Chief who allegedly was an unwitting tool of the Communists, active French opposition and many other discouraging factors.

c. There is every evidence that the French did not want Diem to succeed. Reluctant acceptance by La Chambre (September) and Mendes-France (November) of the U.S. thesis of support of Diem, principally because of the lack of a better qualified candidate, may have eased French pressures against him but did not result in full French support.

2. Since General Collins' arrival, the latter has attempted to achieve a rapid solution, at least partially based on the concept that Collins' mission is temporary and a settlement appeared called for by the time of his originally scheduled departure in mid-January. (Since extended). General Collins' recommendations are now based on the circumstances of a satisfactory settlement prior to January 1. If no solution is found, he recommends:

a. Continued support of Diem for a short period but without committing specific U.S. aid programs.

b. Recalling Bao Dai, if acceptable to U.S.

c. Revaluation of our plans for assisting Southeast Asia.

d. If the situation continues without substantial progressive action to withhold support to the Viet-Nam Army and to increase support of the French Expeditionary Corps while evacuating our MDAP matériel.

3. In our view, General Collins' recommendations ignore the basic factor that we would assist a Communist takeover by a withholding of our aid, even if it must necessarily be given to a government which is less than perfect.

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[1] Dated Dec. 16, p. 2379.

The Secretary has analyzed the situation as one in which we are conducting a time buying operation. If we withhold our support to Viet-Nam, it will be taken over sooner than if we extend smaller aid, at a figure of about a third of last year. In the meantime, we will proceed to do what we can to strengthen Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. This is my understanding of the Secretary's policy.

4. I recommend we inform the Secretary and General Collins that we recognize the dangers posed by the above policy, but that in the lack of more useful alternatives that we will continue to support Diem, because there is no one to take his place who would serve U.S. objectives any better. This includes the Bao Dai solution which is opposed by the facts of Bao Dai's lack of support in Viet-Nam and his past demonstrations of inability to govern. The fear that a fiscal commitment of over $300 million plus our national prestige would be lost in a gamble on the retention of Free Viet-Nam is a legitimate one, but the withholding of our support at this juncture would almost inevitably have a far worse effect.

Recommendation:

That the attached telegram be approved and sent.[2]

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[2] The attachment does not accompany the source text. However, the source text bears the following handwritten notation: "See (1) Deptel 2273 Paris (2486 Saigon) Dec. 17/54. (751G.00/12–1754) secret (2) Deptel 2274 Paris (2487 Saigon) Dec. 17/54. 751G.00/12–1754 TS." For the telegrams under reference, see pp. 2393 and 2394.

751G.5 MSP/12–1754 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 17, 1954—5 p.m.

2477. 1. FYI planning now under way here for OCB and NSC review US policies and operations in three Associated States. Subject tentatively set for NSC meeting January 21. This should be taken into account in making appraisals basic prospects for US programs in three Associated States as suggested Deptel 2130 to Saigon repeated Phnom Penh 167 and Vientiane 115.[2] Some concern felt in Washington agencies over US taking on direct aid and other responsibilities on or about January 1 before basic appraisal available for OCB and NSC consideration. Gen Collins mid-January target dates have been conveyed to OCB and high level agencies concerned.

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[1] Drafted by Young of PSA. Also sent to Phnom Penh as 217, to Vientiane as 155, and to Paris for information as 2263.

[2] Dated Nov. 26, p. 2309.

2. At OCB meeting Dec 15 Saigon's 2250, repeated Paris 706,[3] 2261 repeated Paris 710,[4] and 2168 repeated Paris 681[5] summarized. Briefing put particular emphasis on minute of understanding re Vietnamese armed forces. Paragraph one of memo for record read entirely. State and Defense urgently drafting telegram for French and US governmental approval minute of understanding. Also discussed area approach mainland Southeast Asia, Diem problem, French policies re Viet Minh, and tentative projected costs US programs fiscal 55 and 56 three Associated States.

3. Also summarized Phnom Penh's 352 repeated Saigon 367, Paris 185,[6] and Vientiane's 174 repeated Saigon 250, Paris and Phnom Penh unnumbered.[7]

HOOVER

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[3] Dated Dec. 13, p. 2362.
[4] Dated Dec. 14, p. 2366.
[5] See footnote 5, p. 2372.
[6] See footnote 7, p. 2373.
[7] Dated Dec. 10, p. 2357.

751G.00/12-1754 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

SECRET
PRIORITY

WASHINGTON, December 17, 1954—9:33 p. m.

2273. Limit distribution. Collins and MacArthur from Robertson. Regarding Collins' 2303,[2] Senator Mansfield dictated following views:

"On basis of facts contained in dispatches shown me in our discussions, situation in South Viet-Nam seems boiled down to two questions: Will the return of Bao Dai act materially and in manner consistent with our policy to break political impasse in Saigon? What are implications of recommendation of General Collins that we go along with Diem for few weeks and if it still seems that situation is insoluble to consider possibility of withdrawing from Viet-Nam entirely? As for return of Bao Dai, it is difficult see what he could accomplish in Saigon toward unification of factions that he cannot accomplish from France. It is difficult to see how, after universal estimate of him by French and American officials in Saigon and Paris just few months ago to effect he was detrimental factor, he can now become helpful factor. If there are nevertheless reasons for believing that this change has occurred, reasons which are not evident to me from dispatches or conversations, then I would suppose that Department would have to give serious consideration to possibility. It should be kept in mind, however, that Bao Dai has worked with Communists before. Advocacy of his return, particularly if it originates in French quarters, may well be part of French strategy to work out some sort of *modus vivendi* with Communists in north. (We believe Senator mistaken regarding Bao Dai working with Communists. He joined Viet Minh when it was nationalist rebellion but deserted it after he discovered its Communist direction.)

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent priority to Saigon as telegram 2486.
[2] Dated Dec. 16, p. 2379.

"As for second question relative to possible disengagement of United States from situation South Viet-Nam, it seems to me that following questions are relative: (1) Is Quat or persons like Bay Vien or Tam, persons apparently not now acceptable to Bao Dai, essential to development of an independent, stable, non-Communist Viet-Nam? (2) Is Diem completely opposed or unamenable to the inclusion of such persons in his Government? I cannot advise on the making of these judgments from an office in Washington. It would seem to me that even the Department cannot make them without fullest evaluations from field from men who are fairly familiar with the intricacies of personalities and totality of factors involved. In the event, however, that the answers to above questions are in the affirmative, then General Collins' recommendation is extremely pertinent. If we do withdraw in manner suggested by General, we may expect in my judgment that Diem Government will fall and that French will choose its successor with an eye to carrying out whatever policies they have in mind in connection with Viet Minh Communists under Ho Chi Minh. From our national point of view, it seems to me that actions which we contemplate in this or any other crisis which may arise in Viet-Nam should cut through personality squabbles. Actions can easily be distorted by these and should be based on one question: Will actions contribute to development of stable, independent non-Communist Government in Viet-Nam and are they within our prudent capacity to discharge. If they are not then in my judgment they should be avoided."

HOOVER

751G.00/12–1754 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 17, 1954—10 : 26 p. m.
NIACT

2274. Limit distribution. Saigon tel 2303 rptd Paris 724.[2]

1. Re para. 8*a* reftel, concur in principle. Department concerned lest indications US delay consummating agreements add to confusion and defeatism we are trying to remove. However, any postponement few weeks could be explained by number procedural or mechanical reasons. But agreements or understandings must be flexibly drafted with escape provisions in case Vietnamese civil and military authorities reveal unwillingness or inability carry out undertakings.

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[1] Drafted by Heath and Young (PSA). The Embassy in France was asked to pass this message to MacArthur who was with the Secretary's party. Repeated priority to Saigon for the information of General Collins as telegram 2487.

[2] Dated Dec. 16, p. 2379.

2. Re para. 8*b*, we do not consider return of Bao Dai is inconsistent with continuance Diem Government. Luyen told Heath in Paris that he favored Bao Dai's return around first of year. Recently in Paris Bao Dai expressed continuing support Diem and on his return to Vietnam would conceivably continue Diem as Prime Minister. Question is whether Bao Dai can exert more influence on Vietnamese political situation from France or in Saigon to stimulate urgently needed actions and amalgamate national army. During LaChambre and Mendes-France talks Washington, French opposed his return Vietnam and sought our views on plan for his eventual elimination. Suggest Secretary ascertain Mendes-France views on Bao Dai return to Saigon in near future. Despite possibility unfavorable reaction in US, France and free Asian countries to his return, we would be prepared to accept it provided that he would exert his authority towards prompt initiation of agrarian and other reforms.

3. As prerequisite possible US aid and undertakings Vietnam, Department believes Diem should quickly and clearly indicate willingness take or allow immediate actions set in motion urgently needed army reorganization and agrarian reform program. These are obviously of primary importance in combatting Communists. Inauguration of these reforms in turn depends on ability and drive of responsible members Vietnamese Government. If Generals Ty and Vy are up to their jobs and given free hand by Diem they should be able with Collins' guidance and American training and financial assistance to build strong cohesive army. Against such development the problem of the separate armies of the sects and other problems as well might well diminish in importance during next six months.

4. In Department's opinion crucial test of Diem's ability to govern Free Vietnam and stem Communist propaganda and infiltration among the masses is energetic and immediate initiation of army reorganization and land reform. Complexities of land reform in South Vietnam including problem of large holdings of Vietnamese French and the church are realized. It is not expected there would be any immediate and radical division of large holdings in favor of landless peasants. But real start should no longer be delayed. The experience of land reform in Formosa should be useful.

5. While regrettable in view of his past Department has no fixed objection to suggestion in your previous telegram that Bay Vien be made Interior Minister provided that he would agree divest himself of the gambling concession which runs out we understand in February next. The Department understands that Diem has no fixed objections to Bay Vien's Sureté Chief Sang of whom Diem has said he has efficiency and a basic if somewhat overlaid honesty and patriotism.

6. These comments are of course affected by our awareness of the importance you attach to avoidance of conditions militating against successful development of London–Paris agreements on European security.

7. As interim solution of Dr. Quat problem and to prepare him for possible future responsibilities Department suggests for Saigon's consideration he be sent to States on brief medical travel grant.

8. Robertson saw Mansfield today re Collins 2303 and 2285.[3] Senator's view in subsequent telegram.[4]

HOOVER

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[3] Dated Dec. 15, p. 2375.
[4] *Supra.*

751G.00/12–1754 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET

SAIGON, December 17, 1954—9 p. m.
[Received December 18—1:22 a. m.]

2334. Repeated information Paris 727. Paris for MacArthur. From Collins.

I.

1. I saw Ely off for Paris 16th. Ely said he had told Diem previous day that while he accepted appointment of Minh as Defense Minister, he continued feel strongly Quat should be in government. Diem replied to Ely that sects strongly opposed Quat and feared him as potential successor to Diem.

2. Diem also told Ely he now felt army backed him fully, that every where he went people applauded him, and there was evidence of growing popular support for his government. He added that reports of Viet Minh penetration and activities are greatly exaggerated. Ely commented to me that Diem appeared surprisingly satisfied and optimistic, and gave him the impression of being "a man in a dream".

3. I told Ely I had reports that Diem had said Ely agreed with Prime Minister that this was no time to risk political upheaval by naming Quat to Defense against wishes of the sects, and that Diem had indicated Ely's approach to present problems was very different from mine. (This reported to me by Fishel.) Ely denied that anything he had said to Diem could justify such inference, and reminded me one of Diem's tactics was to attempt to create divisions between French and Americans. He repeated he had urged Diem take Quat into government. Before boarding plane, Ely told me he had repeated this recommendation to Foreign Minister Tran Van Do, who was also at airport, for transmittal to Diem.

II.

4. Later same morning I called on Diem and said I had been informed of his decision not to appoint Quat, but to promote Minh to head Defense Ministry. I said such decision was of course within his prerogatives but that I continued believe failure take Quat into government was grave mistake.

5. Diem said that now army problem is resolved, he will leave all defense administrative matters to Minh and concentrate on urgent reforms and other matters he had to neglect during army crisis. I asked if Minh would be authorized prescribe Vy's duties as inspector general. Diem said he had asked Vy put in writing his ideas of what his job should be. I asked if decision this matter would be left to Minh. Diem replied determination would be made by Minh and "chief of government".

6. I remarked to Diem his failure name Quat seemed confirm veto power of sects over any cabinet appointments. Diem said sects must be handled tactfully until army has reached degree of training, reorganization and redeployment which will permit government impose its will on sects. I asked how long this would take. Diem replied two months.

7. I asked Diem if he had given further thought to naming Interior Minister. Diem said he had been trying find suitable candidate, but that all men he had approached were reluctant take on job until problem of sects was resolved. I asked if Diem would consider naming Bay Vien (Binh Xuyen) to Interior. Prime Minister said Binh Xuyen already have Police and if they were given rest of Interior, sects would cause trouble. Moreover, Diem would be unwilling turn over entire internal administrative machinery to Binh Xuyen. Although Binh Xuyen have so far acted correctly in directing Police, Diem is fearful they may ultimately attempt action against government and is anxious for army to be made effective counterbalance to Binh Xuyen power. However, Diem is prepared to name Bay Vien Minister of State, give him seat on National Defense Council and charge of Youth Ministry. I commented that in view of Bay Vien's past history, his appointment to head Youth Ministry would cause adverse reactions in US.

8. I remarked to Diem that he had probably seen reports of news stories published in Washington to effect US and France had agreed on national army force levels and a US program of direct military aid and training. I said the story was inaccurate in that no such decision would be taken without prior consultation with Vietnamese, and that US Government has not, in fact, reached decision as to furnishing military aid to Vietnam. Diem registered no reaction.

9. Diem concluded conversation by saying there are many favorable aspects in present situation. He said my arrival and settlement of quar-

rel with Hinh had caused wave of hope. Government can now concentrate on constructive programs and is already taking measures to increase its appeal to the people.

III.

10. Reference Deptel 2444.[1] I had already had conversation with Diem described part II this message before receiving reference telegram, and since Minh's appointment as Defense Minister is now official there is nothing to gain at this point from using Mansfield's name to support Quat for the post. However, I shall not fail to tell Diem that Mansfield hopes Prime Minister will be able take Quat into his government.

KIDDER

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[1] Dated Dec. 15, p. 2378.

751G.00/12–1854 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL HANOI, December 18, 1954—9 a. m.

531. Sent Saigon 676, pouched Paris unnumbered. Ballachey, political advisor Canadian delegation and Kilgour, Secretary General ICC for operations, today described last night's performance of plays and dances at Hanoi municipal theater on occasion inauguration "National Festival of Players". Brief summary their comments follows:

(1) All items of performance except some ancient Vietnamese dances had propaganda motif.

(2) Stressed current party line especially attacks on "American imperialism", Diem and to lesser extent French colonialists.

(3) Thoai, deputy to Ha Van Lau on Viet Minh liaison mission, remarked that Viet Minh had not yet figured out how to give "significance" to ancient dances. Ballachey told him they had significance enough from Vietnamese historical point of view and should not be tampered with.

(4) Soviet Ambassador and Pham Van Dong[1] shared their one box with ICC representatives in positions of next importance. No high ranking Chinese were present despite Radio Viet Minh report today that ChiCom Ambassador had presided with Russian.

(5) Program mentioned in several places past Chinese invasion of Vietnam.

(6) One group performers, said to be Catholic and including one French girl in Western dress sang French Christmas carols. Thoai described this as evidence freedom of religion.

(7) Program mentioned 25 different racial minorities of Vietnam and many of these groups were represented in songs and dances.

CORCORAN

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[1] Deputy Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Conference files, lot 60 D 627, CF 421

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford) [1]

TOP SECRET

[PARIS,] 18 December 1954.

General Ely paid a call on me this morning and to my surprise had no request to make for any support in any new line of action. It turned out to be no more than a courtesy call and although he answered questions frankly, the net result of the information which I obtained was to the effect that General Ely was working with General Collins in support of the Diem Government and had no recommendations to make at this time for any change of policy. In answer to a question, he stated unequivocally that the over-all situation in South Viet Nam was such, that a good strong government could win the elections in 1956 if such a government was established not later than next month.

In answer to questions as to whether in his opinion Diem could establish such a government, Ely said that Diem should be able to succeed because two strong nations were backing him. Ely had no recommendations for a change since he was supporting his government's policies and was not free to even consider any one but Diem. He did say that many French criticised him for this stand but that he was maintaining it. In answer to a question, Ely did admit that it was his opinion that the French Expeditionary Forces should not be reduced below approximately 75,000, which number he felt should be reached by July 1955 and held until the situation clarified. (I gathered that he actually meant that this number should be maintained until the elections were held.) This figure was also subject to revision depending upon the success obtained in the rebuilding of the Viet Namese Army. At the same time, Ely felt that it was necessary to keep the majority of the French Expeditionary Forces in the Saigon–Cap St. Jacques Area as a stabilizing influence to show the people of South Viet Nam that they were not being abandoned.

In regard to the necessity for the establishment of a strong South Viet Namese Government at an early date, I asked General Ely if Prime Minister Diem had been given any indication to this effect. In other words, had Diem been told that he had to produce or else. General Ely laughed and said that he had shaken up Diem so often that he could hardly talk to him now, and was leaving this matter largely up to General Collins, who, he felt, had clearly indicated to Diem that he must produce a strong government in the near future. I asked Ely if the Viet Namese Army had really deteriorated a great deal in the last few months. He stated that he did not feel that it had deteriorated as much as was being said. It had suffered, of course, from the political actions of General Hinh, but I gathered that Ely was not too concerned in this respect. I asked him about Generals Ty and Vy, and what he thought of them. He said he thought that General Ty was the master-sergeant type and that General Vy was smarter. Ely said that General Collins thought perhaps they might be a good combination since General Ty, not being very bright, would be easy for our MAAG to work with.

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[1] This conversation with General Ely occurred at the Hotel Talleyrand at 10:30 a. m. on Dec. 18. A marginal notation on the source text indicates that this memorandum was seen by the Secretary of State.

ARTHUR RADFORD

751G.00/12–1954 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State [1]

TOP SECRET NIACT PARIS, December 19, 1954—4 p. m.

2601. Repeated information Saigon 388, London 654. Limit distribution—Saigon for Collins. Tripartite discussions on Indochina took place this afternoon [2] at Matignon.

Dulles opened conversations by greeting Ely and citing appreciation of cooperation he had shown U.S. authorities in Vietnam. Ely gave report current situation at Mendes' suggestion. He said first point to be cleared up after Collins arrived was settlement Government–national army conflict. Accomplished by means Bao Dai's recall Hinh. Second was to try prepare program for Diem Government. This done but question now how to get Diem accept formula. Theirs was how strengthen Diem. Ely and Collins tried introduce Quat who is better politician and administrator than Diem into government but sects and Diem balked. He said only suggestion ever accepted by Diem was appointment Minh as Minister Defense.

Mendes interrupted to make two points. First that Collins and Ely thought that Ministries of Interior and National Defense should be combined. Both offices are concerned with internal affairs and it is unnecessary separate them at this time. Diem had refused this suggestion too. Second point was that working groups had been established in Saigon to suggest reforms to government both administrative and agrarian. Not a single reform suggested accepted by Diem. Mendes described Diem's approach as wholly negative. French Government now considered that as a result of today's talks strong approach would have to be made to Diem. Suggestions should be precise and energetic. There was no time left to allow for anything less. Mendes wished reaffirm his past agreement with Secretary's thesis that we must do our maximum to permit Diem Government to succeed. Now he wished add that he was no longer sure that even maximum would help. He said we must now have alternate formula in mind. Without varying from our stated purpose of supporting Diem Government as long as it exists we must now prepare in our minds for alternative.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] The meeting occurred on Dec. 18.

Secretary replied that he recognized task in South Vietnam was difficult one. Difficult because it required that government be built of indigenous peoples with little or no experience. Moreover, they had to build in time of great stress following military defeat, temporary partition and while there was great influx of refugees from north. Secretary regarded basic factors as favorable. People were opposed to communism and had great natural resources. They had exportable surplus. They received greater aid from abroad than north. Beginning of joint Franco–U.S. task difficult, but situation was much improved now that there was full cooperation between French and American authorities. Problem must not be approached between French and American authorities. Problem must not be approached in spirit of defeatism. Only serious problem we have not yet solved is that of indigenous leadership. We cannot expect it to be solved ideally because there is no tradition among indigenous people for self-government. We must get along with something less good than best.

Secretary continued to say that he had no personal judgment of personalities involved, but our indications were that Diem was best man available in spite of failings. We visualized cabinet with broad appeal and authority. This vision has not been realized. Diem appears to be man constitutionally incapable of making decisions. US not committed to Diem in any irrevocable sense. We have accepted him because we knew of no one better. Developments have confirmed our fears as to his limitations but no substitute for him has yet been proposed. Those suggested in past varied from month to month. Now it is claimed that only Bao Dai can save situation. If that is case, then we must indeed be desperate. Secretary's view we should continue back Diem but exert more pressure on him to make changes we consider necessary. Secretary finished by asking whether Ely had, with Collins, already applied maximum pressures to Diem.

Ely replied they had and that both were now virtually convinced that it was hopeless to expect anything of Diem. Nevertheless they continued pressures. Secretary asked whether Diem had yet been confronted with ultimatum that unless such and such were done by certain date our support would be withdrawn. Ely said he had not. He characterized Diem as extremely pig-headed man who became more so under pressure. Secretary asked if this meant that ultimatum would make him more stubborn and Ely replied it would.

Mendes then pursued subject with Ely who stated that he felt that to exert too much pressure on Diem was not in keeping with the new independent status of Vietnam and that in any case such pressure should not be exerted jointly but separately by himself and Collins. Moreover, he described Diem as having tendency play one man against other in typical Asiatic style and that this was to be avoided. He commented on Diem's own difficulties, especially those he had had in reconciling sects. Principal question was to decide now whether Diem was really man capable of national union. He and Collins must decide that question.

Secretary stated that he was opposed to issuance ultimatum until we know what we would do if it were rejected. At the moment we have nothing else to offer, he commented. Mendes recommended that we approach Bao Dai because of his legal powers and usefulness and fact that presumably would have to appoint any successor to Diem. He had proven in Hinh case that he could be useful and Mendes felt that Bao Dai could again serve purpose. He could be used to put alternate plan into effect if ultimatum to Diem failed. Secretary commented that he realized that we must be prepared to use Bao Dai but felt that we must go to him prepared with our own ideas and not simply to accept his. Mendes agreed but commented that Bao Dai's personal position had weakened recently. In spite of this fact, he still represented legality and could serve in future if "legality" had to be provided to any step we would wish to take.

Mendes then spoke of a plan French have been considering. First phase was to ask Bao Dai to place on spot in Vietnam a representative who would exercise Bao Dai's authority. He would be "delegate" or viceroy. He would have full authority to use Bao Dai's powers. Usefulness would persist even if Diem should succeed for he could act as supreme arbitrator to settle squabbles.

Mendes said that French were now prepared to talk to Bao Dai along these lines and urge him establish viceroy without delay.

French also proposed approach Bao Dai with view reinforcing present govt and preparing legal grounds for new one if it should be found necessary.

Eden intervened to state that in his opinion it would be mistake for Bao Dai to go back now but British recognized advantage of Vietnamese royal tradition and agreed that "royal commission" of some sort should be set up and might prove be best way out.

He inquired about personality and usefulness of Empress and Mendes replied that she was exemplary person who could prove very useful in Vietnam.

Secretary stated that in considering viceroy we were advancing into second problem without having solved first. He did not expect viceroy be able decide on alternate to Diem and to set up machinery to implement our ideas. He stated that our job was to create this machinery. At present time we must concern ourselves with present problem, not with new intrigues. He asked Mendes what his advisers had suggested as alternative. Mendes replied no one specifically as yet but that he preferred allow Ely speak on this subject.

Ely replied that he was more concerned with current problems of Diem Govt than with question of possible new govt. Only certainty is that no more time can be wasted. Ely mentioned Huu, Tam and Quat as among many personalities who might be used. Mendes asked if there was no preference. Ely said not yet. Secretary asked what was wrong between Quat and sects and Ely replied that it was result of an old feud dating from time Quat was Minister of National Defense and had tried abolish sects private armies. Mendes asked if there was no good provincial govt and Ely replied not sufficiently good take on rational [*national*] responsibilities.

Secretary went on to say that we must exhaust all our pressures on Diem to get things done before considering alternate solutions. Radford will be in Saigon Dec 22 to report result our conversations to Collins. Secretary agreed we must explore all possibilities but warned that mere fact we were doing so was sufficient to undermine present govt. He asked Mendes not to think we had obstinately closed our minds to possible alternate solution. We had not but our investigation of alternate must be done on careful basis and we must for present support Diem.

Mendes agreed. To summarize he had three main points: First, to support Diem; second, to study alternatives. Collins and Ely should be instructed to explore further possibilities including Bao Dai with greatest discretion. Secretary then returned to viceroy question asking if proposed man would be independent or dependent on Bao Dai. Mendes stated he would be independent but would derive legality from Bao Dai. Question would be studied further and French proposal passed on to Collins and Ely for study.

Mendes' third point was that Ely and Collins should be requested investigate matter of timing. How much further delay can be tolerated, Mendes asked? We must set deadline. The generals must come to conclusion on two and three and make precise recommendations to us so that we can take necessary decisions.

Secretary agreed but stated that fourth point must be added. It is that if US should decide that there is no good alternative to Diem we will have to consider how much more investment we will be prepared to make in Indochina. Our policy would have to be reappraised. Congressional committees, particularly the two foreign affairs committees, led by Mansfield and Richards, were intensely interested in problem and would have to be consulted. They both had strong feelings. Mansfield believes in Diem. Secretary was not fully cognizant with Richards' opinions but thought he did too. Secretary believed that even slight chance of success in Vietnam was worth considerable investment. US had also to think of what happened in adjacent countries—in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Malaya. US situation was different from that of French. French had an investment in lives and property in Vietnam while ours involved effect that fate of Vietnam would have on rest of South East Asia. Secretary closed by stating that he accepted Mendes' three points with addition of his own fourth.

Mendes replied that he sympathized with US problem but trusted that we would not arrive at negative conclusion. He urged that US and France keep in touch at all times. Even if US should arrive at negative position, France would not renounce hope.

Eden stated he agreed and felt that even additional single year of sustained effort would help everywhere and that we must try and keep up the fight in order to give confidence to others in area. This ended main part of Indochina discussions.

Mendes then said that he wished to raise question of letter sent by Viet Minh to Eden and Molotov as co-chairmen of Geneva Conference.[3] It complained about violations of Geneva agreement by French and Vietnamese Govt. He said that some of Viet Minh complaints "were not unfounded". Whole matter constituted delicate question for ICC would be seized of it and it would prove difficult, particularly in view sensitivity of Indians on ICC. Mendes believed we must exert all our efforts to convince south not to violate Geneva agreements. Vietnamese position had been that they were not signatories. This might prove useful to US later as legal position but for present believed south must be persuaded to abide by Geneva terms.

Eden stated he had rejected letter explaining that attempt to deliver it had been made in Moscow. Mendes corrected Eden's memory by stating that letter had been reported by British Consul in Hanoi. He described letter as not being important in itself—a propaganda instrument—but that it indicated start of political offensive by Viet Minh.

Related problem was safeguarding of public utility services in Haiphong. Vietnamese Govt had been breaking Geneva agreements on this score as well. Viet Minh had complained and justifiably.

Another difficult problem with regard to Geneva was training of Vietnamese officers. He would be pleased to know US position on introducing new military advisers into Indochina and possible conflict with Geneva agreement.

Secretary stated that although we were rotating MAAG personnel we were not increasing it. Radford confirmed. Ely stated that Collins-Ely agreement on training[4] remained within framework Geneva accords. Mendes stated that question was legal one; rotation permitted under terms Geneva but can training officers be substituted for administrative personnel? Was it violation of accords to substitute officers for noncoms, etc.? Mendes said that French Govt would have to study text of Collins–Ely agreement, carefully from legal point of view to ensure that it fully accorded with armistice and requested US do same. He said this particularly important as VM had already officially protested to ICC re US assumption of training responsibility. Secretary expressed general agreement with principle that Geneva accords should not be broken but stated that our interpretation of them must not be so refined that we refuse to substitute x for y if y is ill or less competent than x. Mendes agreed and said that in last analysis people who must be pleased are ICC. He asked that British maintain their contacts with Indians and Canadians, which Eden agreed to do. General discussion ensued on question Viet Minh protests on violation of Geneva accords and Secretary concluded by saying that it would be unfortunate if we were to find ourselves on defensive in this matter in light of smuggling of military material into North Vietnam from China and persecution of Catholics by Viet Minh.

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[3] Reference is to a letter of Dec. 5 from Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, Commander in Chief of the People's Army of Vietnam. For the Commission's interim reply, Jan. 28, 1955, see Cmd. 9461, *First and Second Interim Reports of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam*, pp. 55–56.

[4] For text, see telegram 2261 from Saigon, Dec. 14, p. 2366.

Mendes then proceeded to question about Cambodia stating that French had 500 officers in Cambodia as training mission and intended to keep them there. He asked Secretary to look into matter and to give French US views on subject. Mendes added that French considered presence of their military mission there as consistent with French defense policy.

Meeting then proceeded to other subjects covered in separate immediately following tels. At end there was a prolonged discussion about communiqué and it was finally decided not to issue any.

Mendes asked at end what should be done about informing Associated States govts of our discussions in keeping with our usual practice. It was decided that the high commissioners in Paris would be informed by three-man group representing three delegations. (See separate telegram.)[5]

DILLON

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[5] Secto 24 from Paris, Dec. 19, *infra*.

751G.00/12–1954 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Department of State

SECRET

PARIS, December 19, 1954—2 p. m.

Secto 24. Repeated information Saigon Polto 13, Vientiane Polto 11. Following tripartite meeting (U.S.-U.K.-French), representatives of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia were invited to meet with MacArthur, Roux and Allen at Quai d'Orsay last evening to be briefed on Indo-China discussions by three ministers. Cambodian representative is absent from Paris and will be briefed Monday[1] but Kiem (Viet Namese High Commissioner)[2] and Prince Kham Mao (Laos) were briefed along following lines:

NATO council meetings afford Foreign Ministers of U.S., U.K., and France opportunity to have general exchange views on wide range of problems. Three ministers, during this NATO meeting, met twice and, during course of today's meeting, exchanged views on problems of three Associated States. Presence of General Ely, who has just arrived from Saigon, gave ministers opportunity to have first-hand account of problems of three Associated States, but particularly Vietnam. No decisions were taken with respect to the three Associated States, but General Ely was able to explain the nature of some of the reform projects (agrarian, etc.) which Viet Nam Government is considering. There was also brief reference to recent Viet Minh protest re violations of Geneva accord, which the three ministers agreed was primarily for propaganda purposes. Appreciation was also expressed for the helpful attitude the Canadians were taking in the I.C.C.

In conclusion it was stressed again that the purpose of tripartite discussion was general exchange of views on problems which governments of Associated States were facing and no decisions were taken and no communiqué was issued by the three ministers.

Kiem inquired whether ministers would meet again in Paris to discuss Indo-China matters and was told they would not. Both Kiem and Kham Mao expressed deep appreciation for being briefed and said that had they not been told what transpired, they would have imagined all kinds of things and would have been very much concerned. However, in view of what had happened at the meeting, they were well-satisfied.

DULLES

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[1] Dec. 20.

[2] Pham Duy Khiem.

751G.00/12–1954

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)

SECRET

PARIS, December 19, 1954.

Participants: The Secretary
Mr. Lester Pearson, Canadian Minister of External Affairs
Mr. Merchant

During a call on another subject Mr. Pearson discussed at some length the difficulties which the Canadians were finding in their membership on the International Control Commission in Indochina. In the early days the Poles had been reasonably cooperative. They are now however bringing in people in additional numbers and they are getting very much more difficult. They are blocking action on complaints from our side and countering every complaint of a violation with additional complaints from the Viet Minh. The Indians on the whole have been fairly good but still lean over backwards to appear neutral.

He said that the Canadian military officers on the Commission had been secretly instructed to take advantage of every opportunity for observing military preparations or activities in Viet Minh territory. So far they have not seen any clear signs of a build-up for a resumption of hostilities. He is worried over their inability to supervise the whole length of the Chinese border but thought the French would be unreasonable if they complained too harshly. The region is so rough, transport so limited and the border so long it is really a physical impossibility to cover more than the three or four main ports of entry. Even on these, obstacles are placed in their way for effective observation. He expressed concern over the situation in the two northern provinces of Laos but said they are beginning to get Commission units in there now. He was critical of the French for not having made available helicopters and light aircraft facilities which he was inclined to feel they were using for other less important purposes.

[Here follows discussion of a subject other than Indochina.]

651G.001/12-2054

Memorandum by the CIA Member of the Special OCB Working Group on Indochina (Bissell)[1]

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] 20 December 1954.

Subject: Truce Violations and the Scheduled 1956 Elections

1. The importance of ferreting out, documenting with good evidence, and exploiting to the maximum Viet Minh breaches of the Geneva cease-fire agreement has long been clear but the matter of truce violations and their handling has been raised to a new level of significance by current considerations of alternative U.S. policy assumptions with regard to the elections scheduled to take place in 1956. As matters now stand and appear to be progressing, there seems to be a substantial likelihood of a Viet Minh election victory, and the consequent loss of all Vietnam to the Communists. Perhaps the only course by which the Western signers of the Geneva agreement could concert to circumvent or avoid the elections would be through the accumulation of extensive,

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[1] The memorandum was addressed to the Working Group.

well-documented and persuasive evidence of Viet Minh violations of the agreement. In this manner the whole question of legality might be placed in a new perspective. It seems apparent that a fresh and serious effort to present the evidence of Viet Minh violations must be made in order to create a more favorable climate of world public opinion and to build up a case for postponing or cancelling the 1956 elections.

2. This effort should not be considered as a counter-offensive or anti-Communist in a narrow sense, but rather as a major campaign directed toward the single objective of postponing or avoiding the elections. To achieve such a goal must involve much more serious and persuasive evidence of Viet Minh truce violations than such relatively minor matters as timing of troop withdrawals. The primary dangers to Free Vietnam come from the underground which the Viet Minh left behind and which in places functions as a shadow government; from regular troops out of uniform who act as guerrillas; from caches of arms; and from similar activities which violate the Geneva agreement. The Viet Minh may be expected sedulously to observe the letter of the Geneva agreement with respect to the withdrawal of troops and such procedural details. It is in the field of violations of the spirit of the agreements that the Western effort should be concentrated, particularly in regard to matters which would make elections a farce. To achieve success the U.S. will obviously need assistance from the French and British as well as any others who are in a position to help us, for example, the Australians, the Canadians, and of course the Vietnamese. The timing of the use of such data may be left for future decisions.

3. In Washington, we have achieved a satisfactory degree of interdepartmental coordination on the Indochina problem. But we need in this proposed effort to achieve a hard-driving interdepartmental program for action in the field backed up by the OCB Working Group on Indochina and involving the use of all kinds of media to press home the charges of truce violation with evidence to be developed in the field. In Washington our effort might be directed toward close guidance and support for the field effort particularly when the declassification of intelligence data may be required before evidence can be aired. In the field it is considered advisable that an over-all field coordinator should be appointed. That he should be acceptable to all departments and agencies concerned, active and forceful, is obvious. In addition, he should be familiar with the general types of activities conducted by the various U.S. agencies in the area and empowered to call upon their representatives for assistance and support.

4. The field coordinator's duties would be:

a. To create a more favorable climate of world and UN public opinion for postponing or cancelling the 1956 elections by building up a persuasive, well-documented case of Viet Minh violations of the Geneva agreement. (Primary objective.)

b. To obtain the maximum assistance from the French, British, Australians, Canadians, Vietnamese, and others by direct liaison in the field.

c. To obtain aid as required from other U.S. representatives in his area of activity.

d. To help in coordinating the Washington interdepartmental program which would involve the use of all kinds of media and outlets to press home the charges developed by the field coordinator and his team.

5. It is recommended that the Special OCB Working Group on Indochina and its subcommittee on truce violations consider this proposal at their earliest convenience.

751G.02/12–1854 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Pakistan [1]

SECRET
PRIORITY

WASHINGTON, December 21, 1954—6:32 p. m.

815. Karachi 830.[2] If public announcement not yet made of GOP *de facto* recognition state of Viet-Nam and "Democratic Republic Viet-Nam" you should urgently inform Foreign Office orally of the following:

The U.S. appreciates being notified of the contemplated recognition by the GOP of the Communist regime in Tonkin. Over forty Free World powers have recognized Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam but none have as yet extended even *de facto* recognition to the Communist Viet Minh movement. Only the Soviet and the Communist satellites have recognized the latter.

If *de facto* recognition is extended by GOP to the Viet Minh movement, Pakistan will be the first Free World power to do so. May be of interest to note Viet Minh spurned Yugoslav proffer of recognition in 1950.

Several Asian states, notably Ceylon, Burma, India have extended recognition to Cambodia and Laos, reserving action with respect to Viet-Nam for the time being.

From the point of view of the United States, it would be preferable that the GOP were influenced to follow that course of action rather than the one contemplated.

Embassy Karachi at its discretion may wish consult with UK High

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Also sent priority to London as 3327, to Saigon as 2528, and to Paris for information via pouch.

[2] Telegram 830 from Karachi, Dec. 18, reporting the intention of the Government of Pakistan to grant *de facto* recognition to the governments of north and south Vietnam, is not printed. (751G.02/12–1854)

Commissioner regarding separate action his Government may choose take.

Embassy London should inform Foreign Office urgently of above *démarche* and ask if UK proposes taking any action.

Pakistan Embassy Washington being informed of *démarche.*[3]

DULLES

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[3] In telegram 846 from Karachi, Dec. 22, the Embassy reported that the Government of Pakistan had publicly announced *de jure* recognition of Laos and Cambodia, and *de facto* recognition of north and south Vietnam on Dec. 21. (751G.02/12–2254)

751H.5 MSP/12–2254 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET NIACT PHNOM PENH, December 22, 1954—7 p. m.

398. Sent niact Saigon 411. Deptel 223[1] was handed me at airport as I was saying good-bye to Admiral Radford and he and I had opportunity to give only most cursory consideration to it. However, I believe I am correct in stating Admiral Radford shares my view that JCS insistence on written Cambodian engagement to get rid of French instructors as condition precedent to any kind of MAAG at all is unduly restrictive and will much hamper our negotiations here. Request that Admiral Radford report separately from Saigon his views to JCS with repeat of his message to Department.[2]

I am confident (see Embtel 389)[3] that Cambodians can be brought to give us solid engagements for phased withdrawal of French, but do not feel this need be negotiated abruptly or, in fact, that such an engagement would be necessary until we are in position ourselves to assume responsibility for training Cambodian Army. Admiral Radford and I, however, are in complete agreement that if we undertake training responsibilities here, US should have sole say in such training, and French eventually should be phased out.

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[1] In telegram 223 to Phnom Penh, Dec. 21, not printed, the Department of State asked Ambassador McClintock to attempt to convince Admiral Radford that the United States should not insist upon an agreement with Cambodia requiring the ultimate withdrawal of all French advisers before establishing a MAAG mission. (751H.5 MSP/12–2154) Admiral Radford visited Cambodia and Vietnam as part of a tour of the Far East.

[2] See footnote 1, p. 2433.

[3] In telegram 389 from Phnom Penh, Dec. 19, not printed, McClintock reported that he had been informed by an official in the Cambodian Ministry of Defense that France and Cambodia had negotiated a training agreement whereby 720 French instructors would remain in the country. The official stated, however, that the King, the Prime Minister, and the other ministers unanimously agreed that United States military guidance should gradually replace that of the French. McClintock told the Department the following: "I consider French action in negotiating training agreement without prior consultation with US a direct violation of Mendès-France's 'instructions' to confer in field before taking decisions re aid to IC". (751H.5 MSP/12–1954)

My position on this negotiation has been stated so frequently and I trust so consistently that it is difficult to add further argument. Basically my views are as set forth in Embtel 319.[4] I likewise strongly feel we should not pay for Cambodian Army which does not measure up to our standards of what such an army should be. This is clearly set forth in final two paragraphs Embtel 352.[5] However, these matters must be negotiated and not dictated.

I am willing if authorized by Department to undertake negotiation with Cambodian Prime Minister of written engagement for "ultimate" withdrawal of French instructors but at same time I request authorization to initiate negotiations of a MAAG bilateral to provide me with that expert military advice for expenditure of US public funds come January 1 which I consider indispensable.

McClintock

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[4] See footnote 2, p. 2329.
[5] See footnote 7, p. 2373.

751G.00/12-2254

Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Young) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)

TOP SECRET [Washington,] December 22, 1954.

Subject: Major Problems Involving Indochina for Secretary's Consideration

The following major questions require decision as a result of General Collins' recent recommendations and the Secretary's discussions in Paris:

1. The first concerns our fundamental approach to the three Associated States. The trend of General Collins' recent telegrams is more and more discouraging. If this trend continues he will possibly recommend the replacement of Diem and the return of Bao Dai to Viet-Nam, or the gradual withdrawal of American efforts in Viet-Nam and a revaluation of our plans for assistance in Southeast Asia. Mendes-France has conditionally supported Diem on the understanding that Ely and Collins will recommend a time limit for expecting results from Diem or getting a successor. Involved in this general approach is the question of holding up U.S. commitments on specific aid programs. I recommend that as a matter of policy the Department of State advise against the rigid timetable concept, the notion that we can easily and quickly disengage from Viet-Nam, and the proposal to substitute Bao Dai for Diem. The attached draft telegram [1] is an effort

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[1] The draft telegram does not accompany the source text.

to assemble the basic factors which the U.S. Government should take into account in its approach to the problem of evaluation and decision on political matters in free Viet-Nam.

2. Related to the above general question is the matter of proceeding with the Ely–Collins agreement on the U.S. training of Vietnamese forces. This agreement looks adequate from the point of view of Washington agencies. The first question is whether the French Government will approve it. I suggest that we take this up with the Secretary to get his concurrence on sending a telegram to Ambassador Dillon asking him to raise this with the French Government in the event it has not indicated its position to us by that time.

Then there is the subsequent problem of approval by the Vietnamese Government. General Collins has raised the question of force levels and over-all security with Diem a few times but not in detail. Of course the press stories on the Vietnamese reduction and the application of the Manila Pact have been widely circulated and the Vietnamese are fully familiar with our concepts. However, they have carefully reserved their position. I foresee a difficult negotiation with them on this subject. Therefore, I suggest that we recommend to the Secretary that we call in the Vietnamese Ambassador on this matter after the French have agreed to the Ely–Collins memorandum.

3. In Cambodia we may be working at cross purposes with the French to such an extent that a basic conflict of policy and operations may soon arise. The French want to keep a large military training mission in Cambodia. We want to establish one. Training of Cambodian forces can be done either under French or U.S. responsibility or by a combination of single responsibility and joint staffing. Since September we have not brought up this problem with the French for various reasons. The little country of Cambodia is squeezed in between France and the U.S. on this issue. I have in preparation a separate memorandum from you to the Secretary on this question of U.S. training in Cambodia.

Editorial Note

Annex A to NSC 5429/5, "Current U.S. Policy Toward the Far East," dated December 22, 1954, a report approved by the National Security Council, contained the following list of objectives for United States policy in Indochina:

"*a.* Make every possible effort, not openly inconsistent with the U.S. position as to the armistice agreements, to defeat Communist subversion and influence, to maintain and support friendly non-Communist governments in Cambodia and Laos, to maintain a friendly non-

Communist South Vietnam, and to prevent a Communist victory through all-Vietnam elections.

"*b.* Urge that the French promptly recognize and deal with Cambodia, Laos and free Vietnam as independent sovereign nations.

"*c.* Strengthen U.S. representation and deal directly, wherever advantageous to the U.S., with the governments of Cambodia, Laos and free Vietnam.

"*d.* Working through the French only insofar as necessary, assist Cambodia, Laos and free Vietnam to maintain (1) military forces necessary for internal security and (2) economic conditions conducive to the maintenance and strength of non-Communist regimes and comparing favorably with those in adjacent Communist areas.

"*e.* Aid emigration from North Vietnam and resettlement of peoples unwilling to remain under Communist rule.

"*f.* Exploit available means to make more difficult the control by the Viet Minh of North Vietnam.

"*g.* Exploit available means to prevent North Vietnam from becoming permanently incorporated in the Soviet bloc, using as feasible and desirable consular relations and non-strategic trade.

"*h.* Expose Communist violations of the Armistice in Indochina.

"*i.* Conduct covert operations on the maximum feasible and productive scale in support of the foregoing policies."

For text of NSC 5429/5, see volume XII.

751G.00/12–2354 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET

VIENTIANE, December 23, 1954—7 p. m.
[Received 6:49 a. m.]

198. Rptd info Saigon 285, Paris, Phnom Penh unnumbered. Reference Deptel 132, repeated Saigon 2280 [*2283*], Paris unnumbered, Phnom Penh unnumbered.[1] Department's support has proved most salutary. When I called on Prime Minister today on another matter, he had before him letter from Ourot of which he read me excerpts expressing Department's approval my position on Pathet Lao participation in government. Katay thereupon took great pains to reassure me regarding his intentions, adding he had asked Foreign Minister to send communication along same lines to Washington and other Lao diplomatic missions.

Prime Minister said we could be certain his government's policy is to rely exclusively (he emphasized this word) on close collaboration with great powers of free world. There is no intention whatsoever to admit Pathet Lao to participation in government. His reference to this possibility before National Assembly had been designed merely to win votes of certain waverers and thus bring to end prolonged political crisis.

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[1] Dated Dec. 6, p. 2345.

Negotiations with Pathet Lao are, of course, necessary to bring about "political settlement" envisaged by Geneva Accord and to reestablish authority of Royal Government in Sam Neua and Phong Saly. We will, however, be kept fully informed of course negotiations which have not yet commenced. At present Prince Souphannouvong has agreed to send delegation to Vientiane, probably December 26, composed of Phoumi, Vouhak (see Legation's despatch 20, October 13, 1954),[2] and Singkapo, and has promised to confer later with Katay personally. Prime Minister added he still does not believe Souphannouvong, whom he knows well and who is deeply insulted if not addressed as "Highness", is a real Communist, but Katay for first time volunteered that fact Prince's power depends entirely on Communist support makes him, nevertheless, dangerous.

I expressed appreciation for Prime Minister's assurances and said we, of course, had confidence in basic policy his government. I pointed out, however, one additional feature of Pathet negotiations which concerned US, i.e., likelihood Pathets would demand integration their armed forces into Royal Army. It seemed to me incorporation Pathet units would be extremely dangerous and that these people should be demobilized and returned to prewar civilian status. Prime Minister agreed but said this issue is more difficult to evade than that of Pathet participation in government. If Pathets refuse to demobilize, they may have to be given some provisional status and isolated in some way so that they would not contaminate others. I urged that he press hard for complete demobilization, which he said he would.

Comment: Katay's explanation of his statement before Assembly re Pathet participation in government is, of course, *ex post facto* but it would appear he is now sufficiently impressed with inexpediency this step so that he is not likely to accede to Pathet demand. As to point raised preceding paragraph, our financial support Lao armed forces provides us with excellent means to prevent incorporation therein of Pathet units.

YOST

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[2] The reference despatch, containing information on the Pathet Lao movement, is not printed. (751J.00/10-1354)

711.5851G/12-2354: Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON, December 23, 1954—5 p. m.
[Received 9:19 a. m.]

2422. Repeated information Paris 733, Phnom Penh unnumbered. I accompanied Admiral Radford [1] yesterday on official call on President

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[1] Admiral Radford arrived at Saigon from Phnom Penh on Dec. 22.

Diem who received Admiral in company of General Ty, Commander-in-Chief Vietnamese Armed Forces. Diem in unusually cheerful mood carried on rather rambling conversation. He referred several times to fact that people and provisional chiefs were beginning to appreciate usefulness efficiency of Vietnamese security forces which forces, he explained are not part of National Army but of military and include elements from north and center. These forces he proudly said include elements formerly in National Army. It seemed obvious he is not at all resigned to fact that Vietnam should have only one army. During twenty minute talk he made no reference of any kind to American assistance in any field. Referring to present quadripartite discussions in France, he mentioned irrelevantly that he does not like Mendes-France. During conversation quite evident he anxious impress Admiral Radford with General Ty who he said has full confidence of all elements in army and of people. Ty played role yes man.

KIDDER

120.251G/12-2354 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

CONFIDENTIAL WASHINGTON, December 23, 1954—7 p. m.

2572. Personal for Collins.

Dear Joe: This is to let you know that I will be thinking of you on Christmas. You are doing a grand job and even though the outlook may seem somewhat discouraging to you who are in Vietnam, we believe that not only have you made real progress but just as important you are gaining the time which is so essential for us to strengthen the adjacent free area. I recognize the great difficulties in trying to develop a program to strengthen and preserve South Vietnam but just as important is the time which the next year or so will give us to bolster and make secure Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. Merry Christmas to you and every good wish for the New Year. Faithfully yours, Foster Dulles.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by MacArthur.

751G.551/12-2454 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

SECRET SAIGON, December 24, 1954—6 p. m.

2453. Department pass Defense and CINCPAC. Repeated information Paris 740, Vientiane, Phnom Penh unnumbered. From Collins.

Part I:

1. Defense Minister Minh called on me 20 December to discuss my proposed Vietnam force levels. General O'Daniel, also present, has discussed our proposal with Vietnam General Staff during past week. Minh said he is in complete agreement with principle that Vietnam should have relatively small and well-trained rather than larger but less effective forces, and that he could readily agree to our proposed force structure if we were starting from scratch. However, he continues strongly to oppose reduction to 83,685 level claiming that cut of such magnitude is undesirable for two major reasons:

a. It would render Army too small to deal effectively with sects; and
b. It would result in bulk of dischargees seeking enlistment in armed forces of sects as alternative to unemployment, thereby increasing strength and bargaining power of sects.

2. I pointed out that effective National Army within proposed 83,685 force structure properly trained and led would be more than a match for sects, and that in any case financial support US was prepared to furnish combined with maximum funds Vietnam was capable of providing could not finance larger force structure than we have proposed. I further stated quite frankly that in my opinion there is no substitute for vigorous leadership of Vietnamese authorities themselves in making clear to various individuals and groups that alternative to subordination of self-interest to national unity is collapse of Free Vietnam and take-over by Ho Chi Minh who would most certainly not tolerate sects with private armies and would use ruthless means to end their control over their private domains.

3. Discussion ended inconclusively except that Minh stated General Staff was preparing study of our recommended force structure, and that he would be prepared early next week to meet with me again and settle this question once and for all. I anticipate that he may propose at that time either a somewhat higher force level, or extension beyond 1 July 1955 of period for reduction of forces, or both.

Part II:

1. It is clear that Minh is reflecting serious concern of Vietnam Government over impact that discharge of roughly 50% of armed forces within six month period will have on country.

We have recognized from beginning this would be major problem but believe it could be handled through program of resettlement of dischargees in manner similar to that of refugees. However, it is possible that period 1 January 1955 to 1 July 1955 is insufficient for country to absorb dischargees without serious maladjustments in social and economic spheres as well in relations between government and sects.

2. Accordingly, I am prepared to negotiate with Minh question of extension of period of phased reduction of forces beyond target date of July 1, 1955 if he cannot otherwise accept our proposed force structure.

3. If period of reduction is extended, cost of supporting Vietnam forces until they reach 83,685 level will increase accordingly. At my request MAAG has prepared estimates of costs of maintaining Vietnam armed forces during phased reduction over various alternative periods of time to bring them from their present strength of about 160,000 to level of 83,685. For example, estimated costs of forces during phase-down from 1 January to December 1955 is $256,579,000 including MAAG costs and 10% contingency. Our former estimate of cost of forces for same period was total of $222.5 million ($125 million for period 1 January to 1 July 1955, original phase-down period, plus $97.5 million for period 1 July to 31 December 1955, this figure being half of $185 million for FY 1956). Thus, if phase-down period were extended to 31 December 1955, cost would be additional $34 million. If reductions do not commence 1 January, which now appears will be case, costs will be increased. If period for phased reduction is extended only three or four months total costs would be proportionately reduced below $256.6 million. I therefore suggest that interested Washington agencies not freeze planning figure for cost of Vietnam forces until I have had opportunity to study Minh's forthcoming proposal and make recommendations with respect to possible change in period of reduction of forces.

4. In this connection I would point out that USOM and Embassy believe Vietnam Government will have equivalent of some $43 million in CY 1955 that will be excess to government operations and which will be available as Vietnam contribution to military or other aid programs. If entire amount is used for military program, US contribution could be reduced accordingly. However, I believe only part of $43 million should be used for military support and balance assigned to other programs thereby reducing US contribution to them. This would avoid creating wide latitude within which Vietnam expenditures for armed forces could be made without US supervision, but at same time would provide for some cushion in event certain Vietnam expenditures were made that were unacceptable for US payment.[1]

KIDDER

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[1] In telegram 2671 to Saigon, Dec. 31, a joint State–FOA–Defense message, Collins was advised that agreement with Vietnam on the size of its army and on training was considered to be of top priority. To provide leeway in negotiations, the effort would be made to avoid freezing the figure of the funds to be provided for the support of Vietnamese forces. This flexibility could not be maintained for a long period of time, however, since aid for Vietnam was only one of the competing claims upon funds available for the Far Eastern aid program. (751G.5/12–2454)

751G.5/12–2454 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 24, 1954—2:27 p. m.

2323. Request you call on Foreign Office soonest determine French decision respect approval Collins–Ely memorandum understanding regarding training.[2] If French have not yet approved you should make following points:

We consider French approval this matter highly important and hope can be given without delay. Ely–Collins memorandum is keystone effort create strong stable free Viet-Nam. Since memorandum must be negotiated with Government Viet-Nam after French approval, with further loss time required for such consideration, we are concerned over our ability smoothly take over direct budgetary support. Following termination French aid January 1, approval this agreement key.

We do not consider French approval contingent upon question legality raised by Mendes in Paris talks 18th [3] concerning U.S. substitution training personnel for administrative personnel in MAAG, since that question not element memorandum of understanding. In case French raise again with you, suggest you say our legal advisors have studied that point and concluded there no legal restriction regarding substitution under terms Geneva Accord.

Since no legal point appears involved and we have no intention increasing our MAAG personnel over ceiling set by Geneva Accords, we hope early and favorable decision will be reached by French. We recall Mendes statement during November talks Washington that he would approve a solution worked out by General Collins and Ely.

FYI: We believe French concerned less over legality memorandum than at reaction by ICC to U.S. assuming training responsibilities which might arise out of Viet Minh complaint to that body. French might suggest to us or independently attempt secure declaratory decision from ICC prior granting French approval. We hope this development will not arise and you should make every effort seek early French approval regardless legal or ICC aspects. Indeed if French took delaying attitude that would gravely affect entire U.S. position.

DULLES

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 2584.

[2] For text, see telegram 2261 from Saigon, Dec. 14, p. 2366.

[3] Regarding the discussions of Dec. 18, see telegram 2601 from Paris, Dec. 19, p. 2400.

751G.00/12–2254 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 24, 1954—2:28 p. m.

2585. For Collins and Dillon from Secretary. Pursuant my talks concerning Viet-Nam with Mendes-France and Eden Paris (Paris 2601 repeated Saigon 388)[2] I feel it good occasion for us all review basic factors Viet-Nam problems and spell out some guidelines our actions in near future.

1. Although there many complex and difficult factors confronting Free Viet-Nam, there no reason admit defeat. During past five months since Geneva, situation has not disintegrated. People fundamentally anti-Communist. They have major resources in south. Hinh problem solved and resettlement proceeding reasonably well. In some ways, developments better than we predicted. Collins and Ely have contributed greatly this situation and their cooperation is major asset. Direct aid, reduction FEC and provisions Manila Pact all positive factors which will affect developments. Pace may not please us but major changes such stage of transition as Viet-Nam going through comes more slowly than in West. We must not overlook fact Communists also face formidable problems and if we create situation such that they can only take over by internal violence, we will have faced them with serious dilemma because of unfavorable effect such action on Asian countries like India. Their recent increase anti-Diem and anti-American propaganda may well be result realization magnitude what they face and chances ultimate Free World success.

2. Withdrawal our support would hasten Communist takeover Viet-Nam and have adverse repercussions all Southeast Asia. Consequently, investment Viet-Nam justified even if only to buy time build up strength elsewhere in area. We are going have maintain flexible policy and proceed carefully by stages Viet-Nam. Simultaneously we are thinking of ways and means strengthen Cambodia, Laos and Thailand against contingencies. But we basically and immediately faced with problem strengthening Free Viet-Nam and must devote best efforts that task.

3. Under present circumstances and unless situation Free Viet-Nam clearly appears hopeless and rapidly disintegrating, we have no choice but continue our aid Viet-Nam and support of Diem. There no other suitable leader known to us. Can any successor make up for Diem's deficiencies without also lacking Diem's virtues? Could we anticipate

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[1] Drafted by Secretary Dulles, and Young and Hoey of PSA. Also sent to Paris as telegram 2324. Repeated for information to Phnom Penh as 232 and to Vientiane as 163.

[2] Dated Dec. 19, p. 2400.

stable process of succession and not worse confusion and weakness than now exists. These tough questions and would appreciate your views.

4. I agreed with Mendes-France at Paris four items concerning problem of Diem. (reference telegram) While study of alternate leaders among these points I did not agree Generals Collins and Ely should establish deadline for replacement Diem by another man. It agreed that Collins and Ely would report late January on overall situation.

5. I do not consider Bao Dai's return Viet-Nam would really solve our basic problems there. Neither do Mendes-France or Eden. Nor do I see merit in French suggestion of viceroy, which Mendes-France did not press after suggestion was analyzed. I see little point taking time create such machinery when no successor in sight and which would only add to intrigues.

6. Early approval of France and then Viet-Nam of Collins–Ely memorandum understanding regarding training is basic need. We should make every effort ensure discussions with Viet-Nam proceed rapidly and effectively. Only when we have taken steps reorganize and revitalize National Army can we hope for improved security condition and lessening Communist influence Free Viet-Nam. This will also require very best native leadership available and I hope either General Ty or Vy is up to that task.

7. There also extremely delicate problem our influencing Diem along right lines. I know how frustrating Collins' experience now and Heath's in past have been. Land reform has powerful propaganda value, which Communists already not failed exploit. Something should be done on our side, with our help, put this emotional and basic element to work for us.

8. Although there many other factors consider I am sure if we concentrate on solving problems listed above we will make headway. I would appreciate your comments.

DULLES

751H.5 MSP/12–2454: Telegram

The Ambassador in Cambodia (McClintock) to the Department of State

SECRET PHNOM PENH, December 24, 1954—9 a. m.

402. Sent Paris 197; pouched Saigon, Vientiane, Bangkok.

1. Reference Department's 215,[1] we agree that French are taking steps to consolidate their position in Cambodia as their influence

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[1] Telegram 215 to Phnom Penh, Dec. 17, read as follows: "Would appreciate your views as to current and potential areas of conflict between U.S. and French interests and policies in Cambodia.

"We have feeling as diminution French presence Viet-Nam progresses they may take steps consolidate position Cambodia and Laos." (751H.5 MSP/12–1554) diminishes in Vietnam, as we have reported since June (see Embtel 322 of June 28).[2] French unwillingness to give up in Cambodia responsibilities she reluctantly prepared turn over to US in Vietnam understandable. France quite naturally has no intention lose by default her long-held influence in this country, and can be expected to take such steps as lie within her power to maintain her position in cultural, economic and military fields.

2. With more or less good grace, France has accepted the inevitable—giving in to Cambodian insistence on absolute independence—but since the Geneva Conference her representatives here have been concentrating on expansion of French footholds in Cambodian Councils and in general have given impression their primary mission is to repair Cambodian fences. They have emphasized French conviction of Cambodian independence and rather successfully assumed role of disinterested elder brother, assiduously offering economic, financial and diplomatic counsel, while exaggeratedly observing respectful forms of relations between two sovereign states.

3. In Cambodia France has proven immensely sensitive to any development which could lend self to interpretation that US in some way supplanting French influence this country. During recent months France has reacted to every US offer of guidance or extraordinary aid to Cambodia with a parallel offer, with exception of financial responsibility for Cambodian Armed Forces. This was true of port, creation of air line, financial advice in establishment of Central Bank, Army radio station, and, when Cambodians approached US for loan of an airplane for King's Bangkok visit, French hastily offered one instead. Yesterday King told my wife French had agreed to improve Phnom Penh airport. In all these matters Mendes-France's mendacious "directive" for prior consultation with US representatives in field (Deptel 159 and Embtel 394)[3] has been ignored. However, there is no reason we should oppose French economic aid to Cambodia provided it is manifested cooperatively and not competitively.

In military field French straining every nerve to maintain control of doctrinal guidance, and desire keep French training mission here although US takes over direct support of army (see Embtel 394). Politically, we have impression that French representatives, under guise of normal diplomatic exchanges, increasingly attempt guide Cambodian thinking re international problems, and underground of

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[2] Telegram 178 from Phnom Penh, June 28, sent to Saigon as telegram 322, which reported that "French have no intention to permit US to replace France as chief mentor Cambodian military destinies," is not printed. (751H.5/6-2854)

[3] For telegram 2055 to Saigon, Nov. 20, also sent to Phnom Penh as telegram 159, see p. 2274. In telegram 394 from Phnom Penh, Dec. 21, not printed, Ambassador McClintock reported that French authorities in Cambodia appeared to be completely unaware of the joint directive contained in telegram 159 to Phnom Penh. (751H.5 MSP/12-2154)

French counselors and technical advisers in key positions throughout government bureaucracy and armed forces obviously profoundly influence conduct Cambodian affairs.

4. Thus in general we can expect that France will at least passively oppose US policy in Cambodia in any case where its realization tends to diminish French influence here. Now that US is committed to granting economic and military aid direct to Cambodia, we will find varying amounts of friction with French and more or less conflict in every implementation of our policy which requires US supervision or control of aid mechanisms or of Cambodian use of our assistance. It will take careful steering to prevent Cambodians from trying to play off French vs. Americans to their own interest. Currently, therefore, French will work against:

(*a*) Introduction of US advisers in Cambodian economy and financial institutions such as Central Bank, Export Control Boards, production control devices.

(*b*) Introduction of US instructors in armed forces, and when forced to accept this development will retreat to second line of defense where will try to maintain parity between US and French instructors.

(*c*) US dominance in planning for Cambodian economic future, in projected deep-seaport on Gulf of Siam, in agricultural development, and particularly as related to major problem outlined below.

5. Most important area of potential conflict depends on future of South Vietnam. If Communist take over this area, and Cambodia has not meanwhile developed deep-seaport and alternative communication with outside world through Thailand, they will have stranglehold on this economy. US position is therefore that development such alternative is essential. French do not disagree but at same time clearly do not share our sense of urgency and following possibility presents itself. Fear has been expressed by our Embassy Paris and by many Cambodians that French will try do business with such future Communist Government of all Vietnam. In case it suits Communist to feign cooperation with French in initial stages, French might be expected oppose any realignment Cambodian economy which would tend reduce traffic in Saigon Port where there is such a great French financial stake. Politically too, French might be expected to desire Cambodian cooperation with crypto-Communist member of French Union, and in this case there would be most important basic conflict between French and US policies in Cambodia.

If, as we anticipate, Embassy Paris prediction proves true and French come to some understanding with Ho Chi Minh, greatest danger is French will drag in Trojan horse of "cultural cooperation" which Ho Chi Minh has already formally offered them. French pride in cultural penetration borders on fatuity, and although they have had ample indication of what their efforts in this direction in Rumania and

Balkans generally cost them, French, like their Bourbon kings, never learn and never forget. Communists generally will achieve immensely powerful time bomb if they are able to penetrate French Union under guise of cultural cooperation.

As for immediate problems while we are resolute and willing to spend our money intelligently, there is no argument French can advance which will leave them dominant in either military or economic fields in Cambodia. Unless French are willing to pay for Cambodian Army, they cannot expect indefinitely to train that army.

What is unfortunate in general terms of our Southeast Asian policy is that French for selfish interests will seek to sabotage our effort while at same time maintaining a spurious lip service to Manila Pact. They have neither military nor economic power to assert themselves in Asia, and we should face that basic fact and draw logical conclusions therefrom.

McClintock

751G.00/12-2554 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET SAIGON, December 25, 1954—8 p. m.

2455. Repeated information Paris 742, Manila 361. Manila exclusive for Radford. Limit distribution. Pass Defense. From Collins. Reference Paris 2601, repeated Saigon 388.[1] Following comments submitted for information State and Defense; all paragraph references are to reference telegram unless otherwise indicated:

1. First paragraph statement that "only suggestion which has been accepted by Diem was appointment Minh as Minister of Defense" is not correct. See paragraph 2A, Part II, my telegram 2250.[2] Most of actions listed there were taken upon my recommendations of which Ely had been informed.

2. Mendes statement in paragraph two likewise paints unduly black picture. Fact is that when Ely departed Saigon our staffs were still working on details of six programs outlined my telegram 2004.[3] Ely and I had reached general agreement on each of these programs but until details were further developed, we were not prepared to present them to Diem government. Subsequent to Ely's departure we have discussed with Diem detailed suggestions for National Assembly. Generally these were received favorably by Diem. US staff officers now actively studying proposals with small committee appointed by Diem. While not conclusive, fairly satisfactory progress is being made.

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[1] Dated Dec. 19, p. 2400.

[2] Dated Dec. 13, p. 2362.

[3] Dated Nov. 29, p. 2315.

Similarly, statement attributed to Ely in paragraph 6 that "both were now virtually convinced that it was hopeless to expect anything of Diem" is an overstatement. I made no such statement to Ely though he might have deduced this from our discussions, reported in paragraphs 4 and 5 my telegram 2285.[4] Reference paragraphs 6 and 8, we have not submitted any ultimatum to Diem although I have tried to make clear to him that no decision has been reached by the United States with respect to assumption of training responsibility or direct military aid and have indicated that my final recommendations will be dependent upon the progress actually achieved by his government during the remainder of my stay here. I am in full accord with position taken by Secretary outlined in paragraph 8.

3. I thoroughly disagree with the suggestion made by Mendes in paragraph 9 and by Eden in paragraph 11. As I view situation there are only four acceptable solutions with respect to Bao Dai: either (*a*) he should return to Saigon and use his full authority and influence to force sects and all other elements of country to support progressive program of Diem, or some other Premier if Diem is replaced; or (*b*) he should personally assume active direction of the government as Chief of State and Premier; or (*c*) he should cease pulling any strings from France or asserting any influence, except as specifically requested by French and Americans pending establishment of constitutional monarchy; or (*d*) he should renounce his authority as Chief of State. I assume that these and perhaps other alternatives will be examined thoroughly in Washington as indicated in Embassy [*Department*] telegram 2477[5] and Department [*Embassy*] telegram 2599, repeated Saigon 386.[6]

4. Quite frankly I was disturbed over the attitude assumed by Mendes as indicated in paragraphs 21 through 24. Inference in paragraph 23 that Vietnamese Government had been breaking Geneva agreements with respect to public utility services in Haiphong is not factual to our best information. I told Ely that I had issued positive instructions to our MAAG and USOM representatives in Haiphong to cooperate fully with French in preventing violations of the Geneva

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[4] Dated Dec. 15, p. 2375.

[5] Dated Dec. 17, p. 2392.

[6] Telegram 2599 from Paris, Dec. 19, read as follows:

"During yesterday's tripartite discussions on Indochina Mendes stated that he doubted if, as the subject had been covered so thoroughly, it was any longer necessary to hold the projected tripartite meeting in Washington on December 22, as planned. The Secretary agreed. Eden concurred but with proviso that meeting be postponed but not cancelled which was agreed. There was mention that meeting might be latter half January. Secretary also stated that problems to be decided at that time would be so basic and important that ministers would probably want to decide them personally rather than have them considered by working group. Mendes and Eden concurred but Eden added that working group meeting might be useful anyway for purposes of information and coordination". (751G.00/12–1954)

Accord in Haiphong enclave. No single report of violations has been made to date. I wonder whether Mendes' reference is possibly a removal of US financed mining equipment which French commercial firms and Sainteny Mission may be concerned with. Ely has promised to have more valuable and better conditioned equipment of this character removed. However, Daridan only yesterday said there may be some question as to whether this equipment could be interpreted under the Geneval Accord as pertaining to public utilities.

5. Statement in paragraph 24 by Mendes that Collins–Ely agreement reference military training would have to be studied carefully from legal point of view again raises question authority delegated Ely and extent to which he will be supported by Mendes government in agreements made as indicated by Mendes in last Washington conference. If our conduct of training is to be hedged about with legal interpretations of the character in paragraph 24, then I would recommend that we not assume this responsibility. As indicated in an earlier message, Ely had agreed with me that if necessary, strength of our MAAG training personnel could be increased beyond the 342 figure, if it were done quietly and over a period of months. While I am not a lawyer, I have carefully studied Article 16 of the Geneva agreement with respect to Vietnam and can find nowhere in this Article any basis for interpretations which Mendes appears to place on introductions of US training personnel. Fact is the 342 US total comprised Air Force technicians and MAAG logistical personnel. These must be converted largely to personnel competent to train the Vietnamese Army.

6. After discussing with Radford above details and other factors concerning situation here, we were in accord that if NSC is to reevaluate our policies in late January, to be followed perhaps by US, British–French consultations, it would be desirable for me to be present Washington during these discussions. Even the best modern communications lack the personal touch and give-and-take exchange of ideas which I would think would be essential if we are to make sound re-evaluation of our policies with respect to Vietnam.

KIDDER

751G.00/12–2654 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State[1]

TOP SECRET PARIS, December 26, 1954—5 p. m.

2697. Repeated information Saigon 403. Reference: (*a*) Deptel 2324;[2] (*b*) Embtel 2601;[3] (*c*) Saigon's 2455 to Department.[4] I have following comments on reference telegram *a*. In referring to reference telegram *b* will use same paragraph numbers as used in reference telegram *c*.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] For telegram 2585 to Saigon, Dec. 24, also sent to Paris as telegram 2324, see p. 2419.

[3] Dated Dec. 19, p. 2400.

[4] *Supra.*

1. On rereading reference telegram *b*, I feel paragraph 15 is not clear report of what took place. Support of Diem was not one of Mendes' three points which he desired to submit to Collins and Ely for study. Mendes fully agreed that it was necessary to continue full support of Diem until governmental review of problem toward end of January. Therefore is nothing for Ely and Collins to study on this point.

2. First point which Mendes desired to be studied by Collins and Ely was possibility of appointment of viceroy to live in Vietnam and act as supreme arbiter. This mentioned in paragraph 15 of reference telegram *b*, but reference telegram does not make clear that this was first of Mendes' three points which Secretary agreed could be studied by Collins and Ely. Secretary has indicated in paragraph 12 of reference telegram *b*, made it abundantly clear that he was opposed to this suggestion, so French are on notice as to probable negative reaction by Collins. My own hunch is that this suggestion is a local Paris project which may very well not have Ely's personal support. Reason behind suggestion may be to provide a suitable means for getting Buu Hoi back to Vietnam where he could be expected to establish some sort of indirect contact with DRV. I feel it would be worthwhile for Collins to discuss this matter fully with Ely in an attempt to discover basic objectives of French in making this suggestion. Collins could naturally indicate his opposition to this idea, and if I am correct as to origin of plan, it is possible that Collins–Ely discussions on this subject could lead to joint Collins–Ely recommendation that idea be dropped.

3. Mendes' third point was to study timing. I feel certain that Mendes and rest of French including Ely feel that they have agreement of U.S. that this subject be studied. Language in paragraph 16 of reference telegram *b* regarding precise recommendation goes farther than anything I recollect. In view paragraph 4 of reference telegram *a*, I suggest Collins take line with Ely that U.S. feels this subject is of such importance that it must be reserved to governments and that he not authorized to work with Ely toward any joint recommendation. Collins could however receive Ely's personal views on this subject for transmission to Washington. Ely's views would be useful to Department in preparing for governmental review of problem in late January.

4. I am afraid that Collins–Ely memo re training (paragraph 6 of reference telegram *a* and paragraph 5 of reference telegram *c*) poses major political problem here which may cause considerable delay. An

agreement giving U.S. primary responsibility for training Vietnamese army would be unpopular with all shades of opinion in national assembly. Socialists and left wing elements would oppose it as provocative and in violation of armistice using same arguments put forward by Mendes. Right wing elements and in particular Gaullists would probably oppose it as an unacceptable abdication on part of France. Public knowledge of such an agreement would form valid reason for interpellation in assembly which Mendes-France Government could probably not survive.

5. In view of this analysis, I can see only two possibilities of acceptance of document by French Government. First is that Mendes-France may decide that his time as Prime Minister is running out and that Indochina would be a good subject on which to fall. He might then accept document in full knowledge that it would lead to probable overthrow of his government. As assembly is paramount in France, I do not know what continuing value agreement would have if government overthrown on this issue.

6. Second possibility, provided Mendes survives long enough, is that Collins–Ely agreement could be made part of larger package containing elements that would be welcomed by French assembly and which would make whole package acceptable. Such a package could probably only come out of governmental negotiations at end of January. Essential item in package would be either drastic strengthening of Diem government and in particular installation of strong Minister of Interior or agreement on replacement of Diem. Unfortunately Diem is universally considered in France to be a failure who owes his position solely to U.S. support. French Government has clearly intimated in repeated statements to assembly that Diem is American protegé whom they support in order to ensure continuing American aid to South Vietnam. In order justify agreement to Collins–Ely memorandum, French Government will need either clear proof that Diem has changed his spots and that his government has become effective or agreement that he should be replaced which would entail agreement on his successor. Another welcome item for overall package of course could be an increase in U.S. aid to F.E.C. for CY 1955 over 100 million figure which now more or less generally known in parliamentary circles.

7. We will of course make every effort to get early approval of Collins–Ely memo in hope that something has been overlooked in formulating above analysis. I expect we will need full support of Department with French Embassy in Washington and of Collins with Ely to get results. In any event Mendes will not be in position to consider this subject until completion debate on Paris accords.

8. All of the above is based on assumption Mendes-France Government will be successful in upcoming votes of confidence. Attitude of any successor government is utterly unpredictable, particularly so because of strains which would be imposed on Atlantic alliance by rejection of Paris accords.

9. Paragraph 5 of reference telegram *c*. In view categoric nature of statement by Secretary in which Radford specifically concurred that U.S. did not intend increase size of MAAG over level at time of armistice and great French concern on this subject, I do not feel we can contemplate any increase in MAAG over 342 figure.

DILLON

751G.00/12–2754 : Telegram

The Chargé in Vietnam (Kidder) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY SAIGON, December 27, 1954—2 p. m.

2460. Repeated information Paris 744. From Collins for Secretary. Re Deptel 2585, repeated Paris 2324.[1]

1. My considered judgment regarding Diem government, as seen from local point of view, is contained my telegram 2108, repeated Paris 665[2] and 2303 repeated Paris 724.[3] See also my comments (Embtel 2455, repeated Paris 742)[4] reference Paris telegram 388. My analysis of situation has not changed. However, am prepared to accept estimate as outlined in referenced telegram, except that I would urge no final decision regarding possible return Bao Dai be made now.

2. Our local judgment should be discounted to some extent because of inadequacies of intelligence reference two basic questions: (*a*) What is likely to be the real reaction sects to progressive program of government, particularly as to agrarian reforms and reduction their private armies; (*b*) actual extent of Viet Minh penetration in South Vietnam. I intend to concentrate activities of all U.S. intelligence agencies on these two essential elements of information in next three weeks.

3. The gravest present threat to free Vietnam is the disunity of sects and powerful individuals who oppose any program that is likely to curtail their private vested interests. This disunity is abetted by French business interests as well as French governmental and military

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[1] Dated Dec. 24, p. 2419.
[2] Dated Dec. 6, p. 2341.
[3] Dated Dec. 16, p. 2379.
[4] Dated Dec. 25, p. 2423.

personnel, who appear at times more concerned with national prestige and investment returns than in preventing fall of Vietnam to communism. Though by no means ready to throw in sponge, I am still highly doubtful that Diem has sufficient leadership qualities to persuade sects and other able individuals or groups to subordinate their private interests to the common good, or to so vitalize public opinion behind his government that the army and the public would fully support military operations against sects. Diem seems to admit he cannot control sects without at least threat of military action against them. This may be correct but if only alternative to Bao Dai's return is civil war, we would have little hope of overcoming resultant Viet Minh propaganda and penetration.

4. Right now it appears to us on the ground that Bao Dai is the only one who might persuade the sects that the only practical alternative to unified support of a free Vietnam government is surrender to Ho Chi Minh. Bao Dai's return under conditions listed paragraph three, part II, my telegram 2250 repeated Paris 706 [5] is not necessarily in contradiction to our continued support of Diem.

5. We should know better the ultimate stand that will be taken by sects when cold fact becomes known that we will support only a single national army, in which limited elements of sect forces will be integrated under control of Minister of Defense. Sects position will be further clarified and brought into the open when proposed edicts regarding land reform are published.

6. I understand that nothing in reference telegram negates my proposed course of action contained in paragraph 10 my telegram 2303 repeated Paris 724, until action is taken by French government on Ely, Collins agreement on organization and training of Vietnam's forces. It should be understood this combined with reluctance of Vietnamese to accept reduced force goals as reported my telegram 2453 [6] repeated Paris 740, will doubtless result in failure to consummate agreements with Vietnam government for our assumption of training responsibility and direct military aid on 1 January 55.

7. Meanwhile, I propose, subject to Department's approval, to sound out Diem, at an appropriate time, as to his reaction to possible return of Bao Dai. I will be interested in Department's reaction to my proposal contained in paragraph six, my telegram 2455 repeated Paris 742.

KIDDER

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[5] Dated Dec. 13, p. 2362.

[6] Dated Dec. 24, p. 2415.

751G.00/12–2754

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Young)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1954.

Subject: Viet-Nam

Participants: The Secretary
Mr. Robertson
Mr. Young
Mr. Hoey

Mr. Robertson took up with the Secretary two basic problems: the French attitude toward the Ely–Collins memorandum and General Collins' analysis of the political situation.

1. Ambassador Dillon reported that the Ely–Collins memorandum on the Vietnamese forces would create a serious political problem in France and probably result in considerable delay before the French Government approves it, if it ever does. This unwelcome news arrived during the crucial debate in the Assembly on the Paris Accords. The question is how should we proceed if the French delay or even fail to ratify the Ely–Collins agreement. The Secretary said that we would probably just have to accept the unfortunate fact that we would have to wait some time before the French Government would be able to act decisively on these matters. While the situation was extremely discouraging, there was always a reason to hope that something would come out of these situations. Mr. Robertson suggested that we explore the possibility of trying to work out some *de facto* bilateral arrangement with the Vietnamese Government. The Secretary thought this would be a fruitful line of approach. He read the text of the Ely–Collins agreement and could not see how the French would see anything to object to.

2. Mr. Robertson reviewed General Collins' recent telegrams to the effect that the Government of Viet-Nam could not unify the dissident elements and that Bao Dai's return seemed to be the only alternative for this purpose. Mr. Robertson also pointed out General Collins' prognostication that the situation might become so bad that we would be compelled to reevaluate our own policy towards Viet-Nam. The Secretary commented that there were many long run political developments. He did concur, subject to qualification, with Collins' suggestion that he talk to Diem about Bao Dai.

Comment

As a result of the above reported meeting Deptel 2644 was sent to Saigon and repeated to Paris as 2359. (Tab A)[1]

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[1] Dated Dec. 29, p. 2435.

790.5/12-2854 : Telegram

The Minister in Laos (Yost) to the Department of State

SECRET VIENTIANE, December 28, 1954—1 p. m.

204. Repeated information Saigon, Phnom Penh, Bangkok unnumbered. Joint Legation/USOM message. Reference Department telegram 133, repeated Saigon 2295, Bangkok 1456, Phnom Penh 181.[1] Suggest following objectives and projects at this time:

A. Training of Lao officers and noncommissioned officers by Thai Army. Since Geneva accords do not permit MAAG establishment in Laos and in view French limitations in this field, training by Thai Army would seem best alternative. Similarity of language and proximity Thailand should permit easy implementation such project.

B. Improvement transportation connections Laos–Cambodia–Thailand. This objective basic to any development Laos as hinterland with no access to sea. Its success will govern importance of objectives suggested paragraphs C and D below. Loss of Hanoi and North Vietnam to Communists has further cut off Laos from outside world. Present sea outlets limited [garble] Tourane (both almost inaccessible), Saigon in South Vietnam, and Bangkok. Road network almost entirely oriented to Vietnam and Cambodia. Although shipment commodities to southern Laos as far as Savannakhet via Saigon economically acceptable, similar shipments to northern Laos prohibitive in cost and slowness. One of first objectives USOM/Laos will therefore be to continue improving means of transportation between northern Laos and Thailand. Projects for additional ferries, barges and landing ramps on Mekong River will receive favorable consideration, as will project for improving Luang Prabang and Vientiane air fields (where traffic has doubled every year since 1952) and road construction projects leading to landing ramps on Mekong (such as Vientiane–Thadeua road, leading to future landing ramp opposite Thai railhead at Udorn).

C. Agreement Thailand–Laos for free transit of commodities shipped to Laos via Thailand. Preliminary discussions have taken place Bangkok this subject but little apparent progress to date. USOM keenly interested this matter in anticipation that goods formerly shipped via Saigon will increasingly be shipped through Bangkok, particularly for north Laos.

D. Trade development Thailand–Laos–Cambodia. Feel that important percentage trade Laos–Thailand is on clandestine basis across unguarded Mekong River, that French policy and Indo-Chinese war have reduced potential trade these two countries. Also informed that present Lao exports far below prewar.

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[1] Dated Dec. 7, p. 2349.

E. Educational, technical and public administration training of Lao personnel in Thai and Cambodian institutions. Lao officials have ambitious plans for creation Lao university and various technical institutions. Although such plans should not be discouraged, feel they are beyond realm immediate realization and much time could be saved by taking advantage existing institutions Cambodia and particularly Thailand. Since effectiveness Lao administration determining factor instability and development this country, as well as in success of FOA program, our first emphasis should be in training public administrators who are sadly lacking in Laos today. Remaining French officials have been stripped most their authority, many Vietnamese expelled, while Laotians do not appear aware of fact that independent status now emerging implies responsibilities and numerous administrative functions. Example of Thailand as relatively well-administered neighbor with long tradition independence should provide badly needed stimulus to Lao officials [garble] Bangkok comment this project.

F. Will also investigate as soon as practicable feasibility of hydroelectric dams in Mekong River, as possible source of power for adjacent areas Laos and northern Thailand.

G. This subject is matter of continuing concern to Legation and USOM and furthermore detailed proposals will be submitted as soon as time permits.

Yost

851G.131/12–2854 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France[1]

CONFIDENTIAL WASHINGTON, December 28, 1954—6 : 57 p. m.

2342. Department's 1974 repeated Saigon 2171.[2]

1. Viet Ambassador called obtain reply inquiry re $100 million advance mentioned reference telegram. Department read and gave him copy following statement which was prepared by FOA/W:

"In view of Congressional requirements under our MSP legislation and our policies in respect to foreign aid programs, we cannot make lump sum advances of aid funds in the manner requested by the Vietnamese Ambassador. However, our Mission in Saigon has under study in consultation with the Vietnamese Government means by which piasters could be generated during the early part of next year for purposes provided for in the U.S. aid program—within the limit of available U.S. funds for these purposes. In this connection we are particularly concerned that more flexible piaster funding arrangements be made through the establishment of the new central bank now contemplated in Saigon. We are also contemplating the maximum possible liberalization of our regulations relating to the purchase of imports for Viet Nam under regular FOA procedures.

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[1] Drafted by Tyson of PSA. Repeated to Saigon for information as telegram 2624.

[2] The reference telegram, dated Nov. 29, not printed, indicated that the Vietnamese Ambassador had inquired whether the United States would be willing to advance $100 million to the State of Vietnam during January 1955. (851G.131/11–2954)

"We are confident that arrangements will be worked out to assure sufficient availability of piasters to the Government of Viet Nam to carry on necessary governmental operations during the transition period following the inauguration of direct aid."

2. Ambassador stated request originated by Thoai[3] in Paris and asked if US Embassy Paris could pass statement given above to Thoai. Unless objection perceived request Embassy do so.

DULLES

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[3] Nguyen Van Thoai, Vietnamese Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

751H.5 MSP/12-2854

Memorandum by the Counselor (MacArthur) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) and the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Young)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] December 28, 1954.

I am rather disturbed by Admiral Radford's message regarding the establishment of a MAAG in Cambodia (Navy Message 271919Z received Dec 27).[1]

In particular, I am apprehensive that a written engagement for ultimate withdrawal of French instructors will create a major problem for us with the French, which will affect their cooperation across the board in Indochina. I strongly disagree with Admiral Radford's statement that our aim must continue to be to eliminate any French military influence in the country. It seems to me that we are treading on dangerous ground if we adopt this concept, and I believe this should be discussed with the Secretary before we move forward on it. In particular, there was no reservation from either Deputy Secretary Anderson or Admiral Radford when Mendes-France indicated that the French planned to keep about 500 French officers in Cambodia to assist in training.

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[1] The reference telegram read in part as follows:

"I agree with Ambassador McClintock's appraisal of situation in regard MAAG arrangements with Cambodia and recommend strongly that he be permitted initiate bilateral MAAG negotiations at once with additional requirement of separate written engagement for ultimate withdrawal of French instructors as he suggests.

"Our aim must continue to be to entirely control training and organization of Cambodian army and to eliminate any French military influence in the country. This I believe we can do by proceeding as Ambassador suggests. We must realize that French have in a sense stolen a march on us by recently negotiating with Cambodians for a training mission. It seems to me that they have violated their agreement to keep us informed but be that as it may it is an accomplished fact and we were informed by Mendes-France at Paris meeting. We have an excellent chance to succeed in Cambodia but I am convinced that early action is necessary." (751H.5 MSP/12-2754)

I repeat, this all-or-nothing approach with respect to elimination of French influence in Cambodia can have very far-reaching repercussions which can affect not only our ability to assist in maintaining the independence of Laos and Cambodia, but could very vitally affect our fundamental policy objectives in Europe. I continue to feel that this is a matter which the Secretary should discuss with Secretary Anderson.

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR II

851G.00/12–2954 : Telegram

The Consul at Hanoi (Corcoran) to the Department of State

OFFICIAL USE ONLY PRIORITY HANOI, December 29, 1954—9 a. m.

588. Sent Saigon 737, Paris 266, Taipei 3, Hong Kong 8. Viet Minh radio December 28 and Hanoi papers December 9 announce agreement reached at Peking by Viet Minh Vice Minister Public Works and Chinese Communist Vice Minister Railroads for Chinese Communist aid in restoration railways, irrigation systems, highways, airports and telecommunications North Vietnam as follows:

1. Viet Minh Government has decided restore railway which joins Hanoi to Dongdang and to prolong it to Chinese frontier at Nam Quan. This project will be entrusted to Chinese engineers. Chinese Communists will furnish locomotives, railroad cars and equipment which Viet Minh need.
2. Effective January 1, 1955, postal, telephone and telegraph communications will be officially opened between the two countries. Chinese Communists will furnish materials necessary this field.
3. Likewise, Chinese Communists will export machines needed for highway construction, lubricating oils and materials for garages and tire factories.
4. Chinese Communists will furnish equipment for airports and weather stations.
5. Agreement calls for reconstruction 5 irrigation systems destroyed during war. Chinese Communists will furnish necessary machines and materials.

Finally under terms agreement Chinese Communists will send experts and technicians to aid in carrying out these projects.[1]

CORCORAN

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[1] In telegram 590 from Hanoi, Dec. 29, Corcoran reported on a demonstration he had witnessed the previous evening. This mass meeting in "Red Square" was a dress rehearsal for a demonstration against "American Imperialism" which would probably occur on Jan. 1. The Consul stated that several thousand individuals had participated, carrying placards, Viet Minh flags, and blue flags with white Picasso doves. (611.51G/12–2954)

751G.00/12–2754 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

TOP SECRET WASHINGTON, December 29, 1954—7 p. m.

2644. Saigon 2460 repeated Paris 744.[2]

1. In connection Secretary's estimate Deptel 2585 to Saigon [3] and your acceptance, subject certain qualifications our reservation regarding Bao Dai's return based on following:

a. Regarding threat posed by opposition of sects wonder if fact U.S. will shortly begin direct budgetary support for defense purpose, including funds available for payment of sects' armies will not constitute powerful lever in Diem's and our hands? Assume sects not liable turn to Viet Minh for subsidies and that French direct payments to them will cease by end of year. From reports appears sects susceptible persuasion through financial considerations. If Diem confronts them with alternative of either supporting him and having their armies incorporated into National Army and eligible receive payments through U.S. aid, or on other hand that sects withhold cooperation and receive no financial support, appears to us Diem would be in stronger bargaining position.

b. From our point view above solution preferable reliance on return of revitalized, reformed Bao Dai which problematical at best. Our experience with him over period years disappointing particularly whenever hoped for sudden reformation. Although his recent handling of Hinh case was most helpful, dislike having rely on fortuitous continuation such cooperation. Asian reaction to Bao Dai's return would be strongly negative.

2. Agree your estimate contained paragraph 6 that attitude French Government will probably result in lack of French approval your agreement with Ely regarding organization and training Vietnamese forces by January first. We must await and see what developments in Paris will bring and hope that delay will be purely temporary. However our extension direct military aid in form of budgetary support for Vietnamese National Army will proceed as planned on or about January first, regardless French failure agree to proposed memorandum of understanding.

3. Future French political situation indefinite whatever happens Paris Accords. We should anticipate here and Saigon contingency there may not be French Government for several weeks able make fundamental decisions regarding Indochina or elsewhere. In interim, and since there always chance Mendes Government will fall with resultant power hiatus, request you look into possibility our entering into some form of *de facto* arrangement with Vietnamese Government along lines your memo of understanding with Ely. We might through

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[1] Drafted by Hoey of PSA. Repeated to Paris for information as telegram 2359.
[2] Dated Dec. 27, p. 2428.
[3] Dated Dec. 24, p. 2419.

this device be able work out mutually satisfactory bilateral arrangement giving us majority of elements of Ely memo, with tacit French approval. Presume secret defense treaty between French and Vietnamese may be limiting factor but this unclear. Would like your views on this possibility.

4. Regarding proposal made in your paragraph seven to sound out Diem concerning return of Bao Dai, would prefer you combine question Bao Dai's return with proposition outlined paragraph one–*a* above. Feel it important in raising question Bao Dai's return it is made clear to Diem we thinking only of such return in connection with assisting Diem in solution real problem of control of sects. It may be possible for Diem, for urgent internal political reasons give special consideration to subsidizing sect armies even pending their absorption into single national force. Believe this would fit in well with concept temporary over strength force you outline in Saigon 2453.[4]

DULLES

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[4] Dated Dec. 24, p. 2415.

751G.00/12–2954

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (Young)

TOP SECRET [WASHINGTON,] December 29, 1954.

Subject: Indochina

Participants: The Secretary
Mr. Robertson
Mr. Young

Mr. Robertson and I went to see the Secretary this morning about beginning direct aid to Viet-Nam in January and moving ahead with MAAG negotiations in Cambodia.

1. The Secretary decided we should proceed as scheduled and "take the plunge" on January 1. Mr. Robertson and I stated the pros and cons. Mr. Robertson pointed out our prestige would be considerably more committed in the three Associated States and our ability to disengage made more difficult by this step. On the other hand, I pointed out it would give us more leverage, put our missions on a direct footing and carry out the understanding reached with the French and the three Associated States last September and October. I explained to the Secretary that Governor Stassen had set up an operational mechanism which would keep our direct aid fluid and flexible so that it could be tapered up or down quickly depending on developing circumstances. Mr. Robertson stressed that no amount of aid would be announced at

this time or conveyed to the governments concerned. The Secretary indicated his approval of this general line of approach, and that the program would be subject to discontinuance at any time, as at present.

2. With respect to the JCS prerequisite on elimination of the French in Cambodia, the Secretary stated that it was much too legalistic and unrealistic. It is the kind of thing that could get us into a great deal of complication without sufficient compensating advantages. He felt that this was the sort of problem which could be only handled in time and by various methods. To attack it so directly would only create much more of a problem.

751G.00/12–3054 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State [1]

TOP SECRET PARIS, December 30, 1954—8 p. m.

2762. Deptel 2324 [2] and Embtel 2697.[3] Inasmuch as Deptel 2324 asks for review basic factors Vietnam problem, the following comments which represent a projection of Embtel 2080 November 15 [4] and which bear essentially on French approach Vietnam problem, and which are submitted:

8. Problem succession Diem government.

(A) It is obviously outside competence this Embassy to comment on relative merits individual Vietnamese personalities except those residing in Paris whom we see; and whether one or any given combination of them more capable than Diem to achieve political stability in South Vietnam. It is evident, however, that any alternate to Diem will be subject to same basic limitations as regards the factor of time, the absorptive capacity South Vietnam, and the complexity of the problems inherent in the South Vietnamese political situation.

(B) From French standpoint solely, it is evident that U.S. agreement to replace Diem or relegate him minor role, may be expected lead to a marked increase in French cooperation in regard to Vietnamese affairs. On other hand U.S. refusal to accept an alternate to Diem at time forthcoming top-level Franco-American review will most certainly lead to a deterioration in the degree and extent of French cooperation in regard to Vietnamese affairs. Without in any way wishing to prejudge ultimate U.S. decision this regard, we do feel that it might be useful to outline certain considerations that presumably would be taken into account in arriving at final decision on this score.

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[1] This telegram was transmitted in two parts.

[2] For telegram 2585 to Saigon, Dec. 24, also sent to Paris as telegram 2324, see p. 2419.

[3] Dated Dec. 26, p. 2425.

[4] *Ante*, p. 2246.

(C) As consequence we think it appropriate to give consideration to the possible implications that might be drawn from our agreement to go along with Diem's removal at this juncture or his relegation to role approximating that of figurehead, and the probable consequence flowing therefrom. We expressed view in Embtel 2080 that Franco-American differences over Diem appear to be more fundamental than simply a divergence over how best to increase the effectiveness of the Vietnamese Government. U.S. support of Diem has taken on symbolic significance transcending Diem the individual, his virtues, his shortcomings. In French minds at least and presumably to a considerable extent in Vietnamese minds, continued U.S. support of Diem signifies U.S. determination to see that South Vietnam does not fall under eventual Viet Minh control, and obversely U.S. determination to reject any approach Vietnam which includes possibility eventual North-South Vietnamese *rapprochement*.

(D) As consequence in the event that U.S. should agree in course forthcoming top-level Franco-American review to replace Diem or relegate him to figurehead role, it appears almost certain that such a decision would be regarded in French circles as a major French victory in sense bringing U.S. approach to Vietnam problem more nearly into line with French approach, unless made clear to all concerned that such move involved no modification fundamental U.S. policy towards Vietnam. As we have indicated previously we regard the French approach to Vietnam problem as a flexible and opportunistically be shaped according to developments, and particularly by degree of success obtained by Sainteny in north. [*sic*] Our estimate of the probable future course of French action with respect to Vietnam was contained Embtel 2080 and developments since dispatch that telegram have tended confirm its conclusions.

(E) Although we not in position to judge from here or to estimate probable impact, on basis our contacts with Vietnamese in Paris, it appears that any indication U.S. might be inclined to move closer French approach Vietnam would almost inevitably lead certain of them to conclude that U.S. like France adopting policy with sufficient elasticity so as not to exclude possibility eventual acceptance policy North-South accommodation.

If such a conclusion were to become current in Vietnamese circles, they presumably would act accordingly.

I. To refer to Bao Dai in this context, we have indicated that he appears to be supporting Diem at present for reason he under impression U.S. taking firm and unequivocal stand on Free Vietnam. As consequence we under no illusions here that if Bao Dai were to conclude U.S. taking more flexible line toward Vietnam than in past, he will not only not consider taking more active role South Vietnamese affairs but will tend revert role more nearly approaching that of attentiste.

II. French approach Vietnam problem.

(A) If Franco-American differences over Diem are indicative of a more fundamental divergence of views and if possibility exists that an interpretation such as that indicated above might be placed upon Franco-American agreement to replace or circumscribe drastically Diem's present role, then it would appear that any such agreement should be preceded by top-level discussion with French regarding their longer term objective Vietnam.

(B) Since we have taken position U.S. may be increasingly faced with prospect France moving along a path in Vietnam which we might consider as conflicting with our ultimate objectives there (Embtel 2080), such a top-level discussion might well be appropriate occasion to ask French for their views on general elections Vietnam 1956. It will be recalled that in recent assembly discussion IC, Mendes was criticized for having accepted principle general elections Vietnam 1956. While those expressing opposition to Mendes this score did not seem think there much hope saving South Vietnam from eventual Vietminh control, it was evident however they had no alternative to offer nor did they suggest denunciation Geneva accords or rejection elections (Embtel 2630).[5]

(C) While we agree that Asian countries like India would take unfavorable view Vietminh taking over all Vietnam by internal violence (para one Deptel 2324), it also appears logical to conclude that this also reason why Asian countries like India may insist on strict adherence terms armistice and particularly on the holding of general elections 1956 as offering best means resolving peacefully Vietnamese problem and avoiding any possibility resumption hostilities. As indicated Embtel 2080, we have no evidence that France in final analysis likely to oppose holding of such elections.

III. Continued U.S. investment Vietnam.

We agree fully that U.S. investment South Vietnam justified if only to buy time within which shore up free world defenses Cambodia, Laos, and balance SEA (para two Deptel 2324). There is also the possibility, however remote that within this same time factor, France may become disillusioned with respect to ultimate possibilities being able to work out longer term *modus vivendi* with Vietminh. While many French officials are frank to admit at present that they feel much as we do re possibility being able to do business and get along in future with Vietminh unfortunately these size [*same?*] persons appear share private view that exploration this possibility offers perhaps only hope however slight of keeping Vietnam eventually outside Chinese Commie orbit and of avoiding resumption hostilities. On other hand we feel equally strongly that if implication should gain currency that U.S. adopting flexible stance on Free Vietnam (para two Deptel 2324) and that U.S. continuing its investment South Vietnam in order only buy time shore up defense elsewhere SEA, we inclined think placement of such an interpretation on our objectives and intentions could undermine all our efforts elsewhere in SEA.

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[5] Telegram 2630 from Paris, Dec. 20, not printed, summarized the discussion on Indochina which occurred at the afternoon session of the National Assembly that day. Following the debate, Premier Mendès-France won a vote of confidence by 310 to 172. The 1955 civil budget for the Ministry for the Associated States was thereby approved. (751G.00/12-2054) The Premier's defense of the government's Indochina policy at the morning session was reported in telegram 2624, from Paris, also Dec. 20. (751G.00/12-2054)

DILLON

751G.5/12–3154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Dillon) to the Department of State

TOP SECRET PRIORITY PARIS, December 31, 1954—2 p. m.

2770. Repeated information priority Saigon 422. Embtel 2703.[1] We saw Clarac[2] this morning to inquire re status French Government consideration Collins–Ely memo of understanding on training. We reiterated urgency with which we regarded early resolution this matter and expressed hope that we would be informed French position soonest.

Clarac stated that final meeting on memo had been held LaChambre's office yesterday afternoon at which Ely present. Clarac said French position has now been formulated and now awaiting Mendes' consideration. He said principal French objection had been directed form taken by Collins–Ely understanding. French Government did not wish, Clarac said, to present what would appear to Vietnamese Government as signed Franco–American agreement which they in effect had no choice but to carry out. Clarac said they have proposed Mendes that Collins–Ely understanding be redrafted in form Franco–American recommendations for consideration Vietnamese Government. Clarac said that as far as substance Collins–Ely understanding concerned, French have no objections. Understandably, he said, December memo would have to be reworded to take form recommendations as distinguished from tenor Franco-American agreement.

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[1] Telegram 2703 from Paris, Dec. 27, not printed, summarized a discussion with Roux of the French Foreign Ministry regarding the Ely–Collins memorandum of understanding on training (for text, see telegram 2261 from Saigon, Dec. 14, p. 2366). Roux forecast that the French Government would probably prefer that the substance of the memorandum take the form of a series of recommendations to the Vietnamese Government rather than that of a signed Franco-American understanding. (751G.5/12–2754)

[2] The Cabinet Director for Guy La Chambre, Minister for the Associated States.

Clarac stated they have also proposed to Mendes that French proposal that Collins–Ely understanding be presented as series of recommendations Vietnamese Government, be transmitted French Embassy Washington to take up with Department. Once final agreement reached Washington, Collins and Ely would be instructed approach Vietnamese Government with recommendations.

Clarac stated that while LaChambre occupied with year-end functions this weekend, he, Clarac, would express to him today our concern this regard. Clarac said that although matter now awaiting Mendes' consideration, they did not consider it likely that Mendes would be able to get to it before Monday or Tuesday [3] next week at earliest. However, Clarac said, they aware urgency with which we view this matter.

We shall follow up on this matter Monday with FonOff and Ministry Associated States.

Since writing above, Clarac has sent word to us that our expression concern this regard was communicated to LaChambre in course of morning and that he, LaChambre, appreciates urgency.

In later call at FonOff this morning, Royere, in Roux' absence, confirmed what Clarac told us on this score this morning, and has added that they (FonOff) cabling French Embassy Washington this afternoon to inform Department French position on memo of understanding will be presented Department as early possible this coming week.[4]

DILLON

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[3] Jan. 3–4, 1955.

[4] In telegram 2776 from Paris, Dec. 31, the Embassy expressed the opinion that the French position on the memorandum of understanding was governed by concern for internal political considerations, i.e., fear of domestic opposition to a bilateral agreement for the outright transfer of training functions, as well as by regard for Vietnamese sensibilities. The French position, the Embassy stated, was perhaps the best that could be hoped for under the circumstances. (751G.5/12–3154)

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